THE TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COUNSELLORS

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Declaration

I declare that the work referred to in this thesis has not been submitted in the same or a different form in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institution of learning.

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

There has been a significant expansion of counselling and psychotherapy training programmes within higher education and the independent training sector. The curriculum content for counselling and psychotherapy training is largely unregulated at a national level, and yet qualified counsellors are expected to cater for 'clients' with wide ranging needs and from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

The aims of the research are to examine how issues relating to ethnicity 'race' and culture are addressed in training. The research offers some insight into the lived experience of a minority group, indicating how counselling may be received by black clients. Through qualitative inquiry into the training experiences of black counsellors in England, the views and reflections of a minority group within the counselling profession are examined. Theory relating to racial identity development, internalised racism and black-white dyadic relationships was used to analyse some of the material derived from the research. The dual role of the researcher as 'insider' and 'outsider' is explored through reflexive analysis.

Analysis of the data gathered from this research indicates that the presence and ethnicity of black counsellor trainees was ignored, or seen as problematic, in the training environment. Research results show that direct experience of racism at a personal and institutional level is a common component of black counsellors' experience.

This research gives 'voice' to some of the concerns, experiences and views of black counsellors about the content and delivery of counselling training. Themes and experiences identified as consistent throughout the research are: positive learning about self and identity, isolation, invisibility, tokenistic visibility, frustration, and being silenced. These issues were explored in this research, providing insights for counselling trainers about the impact and effectiveness of training provision for a recognised minority. Some of the insights may have relevance to the experiences of other minority group counselling trainees.

Glossary

AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
BAC	British Association for Counselling
BACP	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (formerly BAC)
BPS	British Psychological Society
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
EMPIRIC	Ethnic Minority Psychiatric Illness Rates in the Community
GP	General Practitioner
IPN	Independent Practitioners' Network
Nafsiyat	Nafsiyat Inter-Cultural therapy centre
NCFE	Northern Council of Further Education
NHS	National Health Service
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UKCP	United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy

CHAPTER 1
CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter provides an introduction and background to the research undertaken. A summary discussion of the historical and sociological context of being black in Britain is included in this chapter with reference to defining key terms and concepts used throughout the research.

The chapter includes a rationale for the research and an outline of the researcher's perspective, emerging questions and the research aims and objectives. The key questions are discussed in more depth in later chapters. Through the examination of the training experiences of Black counsellors in England, this research makes a unique contribution to knowledge about the potential and real impact of training and learning experiences for the counselling trainee.

Rationale for the research

Bird (1996) notes the paucity of research carried out on the experience of black students in higher education (p viii). Existing literature on counselling training offers some examples and case study reports of counsellors describing or documenting their training experience (Dryden and Thorne 1993; Johns 1998; Buchanan and Hughes 2000, for example). White trainees, white practising counsellors and white theorists have produced almost all of these. The examples referred to in the literature imply that the trainee's experience is universal; little or no consideration has been given to the diversity of the counselling training group.

Most writers on counsellor training in Britain seemed to have assumed that the training experience for black and white counsellors is the same. Notable exceptions are Lago and Thompson (1996), Banks (1999) and Palmer (1999), who have advanced ideas about the different perspectives and experiences of black counsellor trainees, and Alred (1999), who quotes the experience of a trainee who, as an outcome of the training, identifies as 'a person of colour'.

This research contributes to knowledge in two areas, providing information about Black counsellors' views on their training experiences in further and higher education and, second, how issues relating to ethnicity, 'race' and culture were included in training and received by black counsellor trainees. It is argued here that the identified differences in the reported training experiences of black counsellors

need to be considered and responded to by trainers and the counselling and psychotherapy establishment in general.

Throughout, the term Black is used and capitalised as a noun to identify a politically defined group who do not identify as being white and claim a shared history and experience of colonialism, imperialism, apartheid and racism (Collins 1991). This will include those of African and South Asian descent who could be identified as black based on their skin colour alone. It might include those who define themselves or are defined as Black on the basis of their religion, culture, language or ethnic origin (Alleyne 2004; Dadzie 1993).

It is acknowledged that the term 'black' applied to individuals is a much contested one, which does not adequately convey the heterogeneity and diversity of the ethnic majority people world-wide who would not necessarily be identified as white. The terms "black peoples" and "black communities" will also be used to refer to the variety that exists.

It is also acknowledged that individual counsellors may identify themselves as being part of one or more minority or majority groupings (categorised by gender, sexuality, age, class, and disability, for example).

There may be some similarities in the reported experiences of being part of other minority groups as a Counselling trainee. Such comparative work was beyond the scope of this research.

Experience as a starting point

The inspiration for this research arose from personal experience. On completing a Diploma in counselling course in 1996, I reflected on my learning and experiences from that training, and considered myself short-changed. Issues of 'race' and culture occupied a minor part of my training experience, yet I saw this aspect as very important to all counsellor trainees, in the long and short term, for theirs and my subsequent qualified practice.

According to the competence developmental stages identified by Robinson (see Wheeler 1996, p21); self-assessment suggested that I was between the stages of 'conscious incompetence' and 'conscious competence'. I considered myself to be trained to work with white clients but ill-equipped to work with black clients. Whilst it is rare that any training programme satisfies the needs of all participants, my lack of confidence was not lessened by this recognition or any other reasonable explanation.

Discussions with my peers, all of whom were white, did not dissipate my frustration. Some complained, rightly, that other issues were also not explored in depth, for instance spirituality, sexuality, disability, domestic violence. I raised concerns about the adequacy of the content and curriculum of the training throughout the three-year period, and felt isolated as the only Black trainee. These concerns were answered by tutors and some peers with bland encouragements and the occasional 'tokenistic' nod to my request to explore the issues of 'race', racism and culture in depth and as an integral part of the course.

To a large extent, my blackness was ignored. This experience was not unfamiliar to me; I had encountered similar responses on my post-graduate teacher training course and subsequent training events since the mid 1980s and presently. In my view, being Black and a counsellor was important because minority existence accentuates visibility. There was nowhere to hide; no real escape from being identifiable.

Yet my training experience had led me to believe otherwise: at times it seemed that I was 'invisible' or seen as white. This was not, however, my reality as a trainee counsellor or counselling trainer. I found and continue to find that being Black is an important component of what I have to offer as a therapist. This does not mean that I need to refer to it as a fact constantly, but it does mean that I am aware of the impact that I make, and the understandings that I arrive at are influenced, to some extent, by my experience of being Black. This is partly because, for the time being at least, I am in a minority in the counselling profession.

Patricia Hill Collins (1991) refers to the position of Black women who are often located as 'outsider-within'; that is, in the position of 'outside' observer and carer in their working relationships with white people, being in their world and yet clearly not being part of it. This experience of isolation and the accompanying feelings is echoed time and again in the research findings referred to later.

Four important experiences persuaded me to reflect further on my training experience and pursue this research:

(i) My experience of personal therapy as part of training requirement

(ii) My practical experience of working with Black and white clients

(iii) A profound sense of incredulity that so many of my peers felt 'reasonably confident' to work with Black clients, or would, and could actively choose not to work with them;

(iv) Concurrent experience as a counselling trainer working with black and white students stimulated by my interest and sense of responsibility for improving the quality of the training experience.

I drew a significant amount of support from the substantial amount of North American theoretical writing about Black psychology; most of it, whilst relevant, illuminating and challenging, did not translate easily into the British context of counselling practice.

I joined a support and study group established after attendance at a conference on 'Issues of Race and Culture' in Sheffield, 1994. It was at this conference and at counsellor conference gatherings in subsequent years that I discovered from other Black peers that my training experience was not necessarily unique and worthy of further enquiry.

In my position as a counselling trainer and course co-ordinator within a Higher Education setting, I recognised the significant constraints, challenges and benefits of incorporating a 'transcultural perspective' (d'Ardenne and Mahtani 1989) into the curriculum design and delivery of the training I offered. It was and is incumbent on me from this position of relative influence to seek to embed the issues of 'race' and culture as an integral part of the training offered, rather than as an added extra. Achieving this posed a number of questions and challenges. Given its current density, how can the issues of 'race' and culture be successfully and sensitively integrated and embedded into counsellor training? How best to assess and fulfil the additional training needs of the trainer? An evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the training offered was necessary.

Aims of the research

As stated earlier, the impetus for this research was to find out whether the researcher's experience of counsellor training was unusual, and to investigate the ways in which training affects the trainee. There were two main aims of the research: the first was to examine and document the views of Black counsellors on their training experiences, analysing these experiences from their perspective of being in a minority in the training environment. The second aim was to investigate how issues relating to ethnicity race and culture were included in training and received by Black counsellor trainees. Through this research new knowledge about the Black trainees' experience has been gained, and indicators for the future development of counselling

training were identified. This was achieved with reference to the key research questions detailed below, and by pursuing the following objectives:

1. The collection and analysis of Black counsellors' phenomenological accounts of their training experiences.

2. Investigating how issues relating to ethnicity, culture and diversity were included in training and received by Black counsellor trainees.

3. Presenting a summary analysis of the literature on the construing of 'race', ethnicity, and racial identity development in the counselling relationship; exploring how these and related matters are addressed in the training environment and might occur in counselling practice. This is preceded by a review of relevant historical, sociological and psychological factors that have an impact on black-white relations and consequently on counselling relationships.

4. Conducting a brief review of counselling training provision, with a focus on relevant course delivery issues as they affect trainees and their subsequent practice as counsellors.

Key research questions

The aforementioned objectives were broadened to highlight a number of related questions and issues addressed throughout this research:

1. What, if anything was 'different' about the needs of Black counselling trainees?
   Did Black counselling trainees need special consideration whilst in training?
2. What did Black counselling trainees bring to training that might put them at an advantage or disadvantage?
3. What did Black counsellors derive from training to enable them to work with Black and white clients?
4. What was the long term impact of counselling training on Black counsellors both as individuals and as professionals?
5. What might be the responsibilities and needs of the counselling trainer, training and curriculum regulation bodies within higher education institutions, and national counselling organisations for training standards and future development?
6. How might the outcome of the research contribute to the debate about the training of Black and white counsellors in general?

I chose to investigate and document the training experience of Black counsellors by analysis of accounts about their training experience and subsequent counselling practice. This was achieved through the qualitative research methods, using the analysis of in-depth interviews with Black counsellors. Relevant theory is discussed arising from the themes that emerge.

Details of the methods used in this research to gather and analyse data will be discussed in more depth in chapters 4 and 5.

Troyna (1993) contended that Black interviewers or researchers may learn more about a Black person's experience of racism because of their shared ethnicity. He warned that emergent findings and data could be dismissed by white academics as being biased and therefore unreliable, because it may not be commensurate with previous similar research findings conducted by white researchers. This warning is justified in view of Howarth's (2002) assertion that Black researchers on black issues are more likely to be biased in favour of their black participants.

Whilst the data and findings of any research are open to question, it could be claimed that inherent in such a challenge about the veracity of research is a notion of white superiority, and an assumption that white researchers are more able to maintain objectivity when interviewing white people about their experiences than Black researchers are able to do when carrying out research into Black people's experience.

Key defining terms

Commentary and review of definitions assigned to key terms used in this research are provided here. The terms 'Black,' ''race'' 'racism' 'culture' 'ethnicity' 'whiteness' are included here and an attempt has been made to arrive at working definitions for these terms where appropriate. The terms presented are inter-related and in some cases used inter-changeably as descriptors, despite some clear differences in definition in the way that quoted authors and interviewees have used them. It is acknowledged that these terms and their definitions are in a state of constant change and flux, and need to be used with care in the knowledge of their shifting meanings to individuals and their contexts.

Black

In 'Black Skin, White Masks' (1967), Black psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon uses his own experience and observations to describe the ways in which being black is symbolised negatively. These symbols are applied to those with black skin, thus defining the predicament of black peoples in their relationships with whites. Central to Fanon's argument about 'race' is the concept that Blacks have to be black so that white people can disown evil - Fanon described evil as 'the black hollow', their 'darker side', or 'base emotions' - as not being part of themselves. Fanon asserts that, in disowning evil as black, white men seek to climb 'upwards' towards light and whiteness.

> 'In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the "black problem." Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinths of the earth, abysmal depths...and on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical, heavenly light. A magnificent blond child-how much peace there is in that phrase, how much joy, and above all how much hope!'
>
> (p.189)

Dalal (1993) shows how the colonizer used colour to distinguish between 'us' and 'them' and argues that the political category of Black has been created by whites.

> 'In order to do this successfully, it was necessary for the hallucinatory whitening of all the peoples of Europe including the Roman, the Greek, the Celt, and of course Jesus Christ, so that they could be distinguished from 'the coloured.'
>
> (p.278)

Francis (2002) describes the historical and pervasive 'negative' and 'dangerous' black male archetypes that exist, giving an example of Shakespeare's depiction of Prospero's slave Caliban, who embodies madness, intellectual inferiority, savagery and sexual threat towards his delicate daughter. Francis transposes some of this stereotyping into modern thinking about blackness. As Black you can be: good at sport, not good at studying, disruptive in class, possessed of a good sense of rhythm, being innately physically advantaged, but not good at tactical or strategic thinking. You may be a supermodel but you are liable to temper tantrums - you may suffer from schizophrenia but not depression.

Collins' (1991) reference to Black African American stereotypes that continue to exist; of being 'dangerous', 'powerful', a mother figure - can also apply to common perceptions of Black women in general and, from the research evidence, within counselling training groups.

Littlewood and Lipsedge (1989) supply significant evidence through case studies of the ways in which black patients in their care internalise the negative imagery of the colour black as being part of themselves and therefore to be feared and rejected.

However, Solomos and Back (1996) cite the work of Modood and others who contend that the notion of a Black identity is erroneous, arguing for more focus on

separate identities of Black groups. Brah (1992) insists that the term 'Black' was adopted in Britain by African Caribbeans and South Asians who were inspired by the cohesive and challenging effects of the Black Power movement in the United States during 1960s and 1970s and is of limited relevance. Mirza (1997), Bakare-Yusuf (1997) and Ang-Lygate (1997) are amongst a substantial number of black British feminists and academics who reject the notion of black homogeneity and the inadequacy of the label Black. They challenge the constraints of attributed 'Black identity', claiming that the focus on this obscures important debates about difference and denies the diversity of experiences and existence of the multiplicity of identities that the term 'black' seems to encompass. Critics of the term Black used to differentiate ethnic difference argue that the black-white binary is an outdated concept which is neither relevant nor applicable to large sections of the population, for instance South Asians or Chinese. Root (2000), notes the increase in dual or mixed racial identities of the North American populace arguing that the implications of the black-white binary is redundant. Recent statistics indicate that thirty-nine per cent of children under sixteen years of age with one black Caribbean parent have a white other parent. This demographic evidence within the United Kingdom suggests that Root's (2000) argument may also be factor in future debate on black-white relations.

The argument is that within this category of black there are a multitude of self-descriptions that might apply. For instance, some people might refer to themselves as Persons of Colour, Black Asian, Brown, Turkish, Irish, Chinese, Black African, South Asian and so on. d'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989) and others seek to widen the political definition of Black to include 'anyone who could experience racism' (p11). Lago and Thompson (1996) similarly use the term to describe those who are not the traditional holders of power, members of the 'dominant majority group in a society'. (p.xxi). Although not included as part of this research, some Irish people in the British Isles have referred to themselves as 'Black' on the basis of their experience of racism and marginalisation.

Nevertheless, the attention paid to the visibility of most people defined as Black in Britain is a reality. Neither can the large number of negative connotations, associated with the colour black as used in Britain, identified directly by Fryer (1992), Stevens (1998) (appendix 1), and ironically by Benjamin Zephaniah in his poem 'White Comedy' (1995) (appendix 1), be denied. It could be argued that by

accepting the term Black there is scope to challenge the stereotypes and hegemonic views of black peoples as a group.

The research participants identified themselves as being Black based on their ethnicity and, in some cases, as not white and therefore politically Black.

Shadeism

'Shadeism' is the means by which distinctions are drawn between black peoples on the basis of their shade of skin colour. Catherine Hall (2001) describes the ways in which the 'grammar of difference' was employed by the European coloniser and the colonised as a means of defining and maintaining difference and superiority. In many ways the grammar of shadeism perpetuates this construction of difference. Angela Jackson (2000) describes how in 1712 Willie Lynch, a British slave owner, instilled divisiveness as a means of control amongst black slaves by defining skin colour as light and dark, light skin being superior to dark skin. A hierarchy of identifiable shades of blackness based on birth and heritage was devised, and brought with it varying legal and social entitlements in the eighteenth century. In some senses this practice can be seen to have continued in the United States and in South Africa during apartheid, when blacks were differentiated by shade and heritage.

Jackson (2000) argues that as shadeism is a damaging legacy of slavery and colonisation, Black counsellors should be aware of the unconscious shadeism within themselves, suggesting that the conscious and unconscious re-enactment of shadeism is more prevalent in the black-black therapeutic encounter.

Race

The term 'race' has been declared by many theorists to be unhelpful and pejorative, with no scientific basis (Eleftheriadou 1994; Gilroy 1993; Solomos and Back 1996). However it is used and continues to be used to theorise on relations between peoples who are classified and categorised as having a race and therefore existing as racial beings.

'Race' can be viewed from a biological or sociological perspective. The sociological view implies that 'race' can be used to determine how a person is treated in law and in everyday relationships. The biological view refers to comparison of anatomy, and examines how people from different racial groups adapt to the environment.

Solomos and Back (1996) assert that 'race' is a social construction the concept of which emerged in Britain in the mid to late eighteenth century and was linked to capitalist and colonial expansion. It is frequently pointed out in texts that there are

more significant differences that exist within a defined 'race' than exists between differently named 'races'. According to Torres et al (2000), 'race' is not a natural category

> '...but plays a central rôle in the construction and rationalization of orders of difference, making group relations appear as if they were natural and unchangeable.'
> (p.5)

Carter (1995) defines 'race' as a concept created by white people, who do not think of themselves in racial terms and presume classification of all human groups on the basis of visible physical traits and behavioural difference. He concludes that the ranking of 'races' is implicit in this classification. This definition is in part echoed by others, including Solomos and Back (1996), who additionally refer to lineage and biological racial type in their definition of 'race'. As indicated by Figueroa (1991), Carter (1995), Solomos and Back (1996) and Malik (2003), 'race' is an artificial social and social scientific construct used to identify colour and difference both by those theorists who deny it and yet continue to use it in their writing, and by those that accept it as a useful term.

Richards (1997) cautions against the 'racialized discourse' which uses racial labels to identify self and others, and argues for the affirmation of some 'common humanity' whilst acknowledging cultural difference. It is this proposal that is often promoted by those who want to end separation of cultures, but this is often perceived as a mask to encourage assimilation in favour of white culture or, in the case of Britain, 'Britishness'. Malik (2003) asserts that the maintenance of race as concept celebrates difference but also feeds racism and racist ideology. This stance, claims Malik (2003) compromises the possibility of social equality. He argues that,

> 'The real debate about race is not whether there any differences between populations, but about the significance of such differences.'

Ponterotto and Pedersen (1993) note that the term 'race' may have significant social consequences; in particular, the assumptions that are made about people based on their racial characteristics with regard to their 'intelligence' and behaviour in relationships. These assumptions, based on irrelevant categorisation, have a long and continuing history. Yet the apparently scientific invalid categorisation of 'races' has served politically and economically to disenfranchise and damage, physically and

psychologically, identified groups of the human race over centuries. Malik (2003) asserts that it is on the basis of 'race' that racism exists.

Dalal (1993) argues that ''race' is stereotype disguised existing only within the context of racism'. It is suggested that those who object to the term 'race' are to some extent denying a reality. Lewis R. Gordon (1997) asserts that:

> '...as a function of an historical fact: 'race' has emerged, throughout its history as a question fundamentally of "the blacks" as it has for no other group. It is not that other groups have not been "racialized." It is that their racialization...has been conditioned by a chain of being from the European to the subhuman - on a symbolic scale from the light to the dark.'
>
> (p.5)

It is on these terms that the term 'race' is included in this research; because it is often used as a euphemism, and a less contentious means of discussing or referring to racism. Ware and Back (2002) suggest that the concept of race may not end because it has been claimed by those who are not white as a way of defining their own 'racial uniqueness' (p164).

Racial prejudice

Racial prejudice refers to a prejudicial negative attitude towards 'a socially defined group and toward any person perceived to be a member of that group' (cited in Banks 1999, p41.) Racial prejudice is not confined to white people. For instance, it is present amongst Black African Caribbean and African communities. More specifically, for this research, it is clear that whites, as the dominant social group in Britain, have the power to be racist in their actions and behaviours and can act on their prejudices.

Racism

Whilst the term 'race' can be dismissed as irrelevant, there is no doubt about reality of racism at the individual or institutional level. The Black Women's Sub-Committee of the British Sociological Association (2002) defines racism as:

> 'A variety of attitudes, practices and types of behaviour which may not necessarily be overt or intentional but which serve to discriminate against or to marginalise people judged to be of another race.' (p 6)

Castles and Miller (1993) observe that the settlement of immigrants does not explain

racism in the United States, Australia and Britain. They remark that racism, against white immigrants tends to dissipate over time, whilst racism against blacks continues over generations.

Cole (2004) proposes a wider definition of racism, which incorporates overt and covert oppressive and exclusive discriminatory practices, as well as actions based on notions of cultural and biological inferiority. From the post-modernist and post-structuralist position, he suggests that racism exists in different forms in different historical and geographical locations and is related to economic and political factors. Eurocentrism, for instance, which lays claim to the centrality and superiority of Western European civilisation, could be seen as a form of racism. Currently, Western Europe is engaged in wrestling with the tensions that immigration and racism brings. Castles and Miller (1993) argue that racism portrays immigrants as aliens and paradoxically 'creates the ghettoes it fears' (p206).

Institutional racism

Institutional racism could be defined as the way in which the law, social policies and institutions are designed and regulated to maintain the social, political and economic advantage of white people over black people. However, it is possible for black people to be institutionally racist, in the same way that those who see themselves as non-racist may be acceptant and implicated in perpetuating institutionally racist structures. This situation can become apparent in the workplace in the execution of governmental, employment, health or education policies.

In practice, racism is the pursuance and promotion of racial prejudice at an individual and/or institutional level.

The Macpherson report (1999) defined institutional racism as:

> 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice. ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.'

Much of the discourse and attempts by theorists to define racism focuses on the misuse of power and power differentials in a relationship, with the concept of 'race' as a key factor at the heart of racism and racist ideology. It is predicated on a notion of racial supremacy. The effect of racism is that it systematically denies the needs, rights and access of opportunity to one social group while perpetuating acts of

privilege to other members of another group. Black people, or those who are labelled as non-white, are usually the group or groups of people denied access of opportunity. Institutional racism is a form of social control of a group or groups who may be perceived as uncontrollable. This is evident in governmental policies which seek to limit or control routes of access for 'racial groups'. As Eleftheriadou (1994) points out, racism:

> '... creates feelings of envy, anger, jealousy, aggression, greed, deprivation, mistrust, fear and powerlessness.'
>
> (p.119)

These feelings, when acted upon, can be difficult to identify as institutionally racist.

New racism

The ideology of new racism focuses on the threat that the cultural differences of others might pose on a shared sense of British culture. This notion replaces the focus of 'race' and racial difference with incompatible 'culture' as problematic. Proponents of new racism seek to protect British culture from the influx of other influences, notably those who are Black, essentially people with different cultural experiences. (The Black Women's sub-committee of the British Sociological Association, 2002.) This is in spite of the fact that the latter may have been born in Britain.

Racialism

In the 1970s and early 1980s the word racialism was a commonly used (and frequently misused) term to describe those who discriminated against others on the basis of 'race', and was used interchangeably with racism.

Richards (1997) has defined the distinction between racism and racialism. Racialism is defined by Richards as:

> '... the theoretical or ideological belief in the reality of 'races' and the scientific validity of analysing human affairs and human diversity in terms of racial difference.'
>
> (p xi)

He concludes from this that some racialists are racists; but that some racists are not racialists, because their behaviour is not founded on theory or ideology.

Culture

Definitions of culture abound, but all who define it agree that culture is a human creation, and is learned behaviour that is transmitted through generations. Culture has been described as 'the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the

members of one group from another' (Hofstede, 2001). This includes shared customs, language, beliefs and agreed ways of behaving, symbolising meaning (Carter 1995; Eleftheriadou 1994; Fernando 1991; Locke 1992; Williams 1993)
The various ways in which the term 'culture' was understood and used is an important feature of the research interviews used here. The researcher and research participants used the term at times euphemistically to identify and describe 'race' and racial issues. This could be illustrative of some 'soft-pedalling' or squeamishness on the part of those involved in the research. Rather than talking about issues for black people or racism, use was made of words approximating to talking about the impact of racism. One reason behind this was that in keeping with one aspect of Grounded Theory research methods, the study of available literature on the terms: race, racism and culture, took place when the collection of data was almost complete.
At times, I have used the word 'culture' in this research to encompass ethnicity, cultural behaviour and 'race' as it has been used by research participants interviewed. It has also been used synonymously to refer to 'race' and ethnicity in the work of theorists. It is interesting to note that new racism, with its focus on culture, also adopts this word as one that, at least on the surface, seems less confrontational.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity or ethnic group of a person refers to their shared cultural experience, religion, national origin and history with others, but not necessarily their phenotypical similarities. To some extent, the claim of ethnicity implies individual choice or categorisation by others and is dependent on perception. It is more dependent on what an individual feels about him or herself than it is about how a person is observed to behave. Solomos and Back (1996) suggest that ethnicity is a social construction devised to create a boundary between people, and is 'policed by contemporary racism' (p127). Ethnicity and ethnic groupings may emerge as a result of an alliance against societal pressures such as racism. Dalal (1993) suggests that ethnicity is 'not fixed - it is situationally defined', making a distinction between 'us' and 'them'. An individual may be assigned to an ethnic group by the 'us' without feeling part of that group, 'them'. In addition, an ethnic group might be re-classified as a 'race' by those who wish to isolate and oppress them (Fernando 1991).
Variously, ethnicity has been used to describe members of Black communities, 'race', and racial difference. For example, within this research, some interviewees

came to identify more strongly with their ethnicity or ethnic group as a result of a formative experience of racism.

Minority ethnic / Ethnic minority

The term ethnic minority refers to Black community groups who are not in the majority in Britain and also have minimal power. The ethnic minority in Britain can be identified by group characteristics and are socially visible. Ethnic minority is an ill-favoured term amongst Black communities because of its pejorative connotations and because ethnic minority membership is often assigned by those in power. The term does not necessarily refer to the size or number of the group's representation elsewhere in the world. Throughout this research, the term minority ethnic will be used as a preferred term unless quoting from a text, publication or person.

Whiteness

Whilst theorists agree that the terms white and black, when used to classify humans, have no objective reality, they are used as terms to signify, separate and define people. Catherine Hall (2001) described this categorisation as a kind of 'grammar of difference', adding that 'Whiteness carries with it authority and power, the legacy of having "made the modern world", of not being "strangers anywhere in the world".'

The terms white and whiteness are used in this research as defined by the Black Women's Sub-Committee of the British Sociological Association. Whiteness is:

> '...- the "silent", pervasive, cultural norm that informs and shapes our racial ideology. Whiteness is constructed as a formless, empty cultural space that is neutral, natural and normative... [it is] an unnamed, hegemonic position of privilege and power, [and] becomes the point of reference for measuring others.'
>
> (2002)

The aforementioned terms are used frequently in Black theoretical discourse and in discussion about 'race' and racism. Racism and its consequences, issues of 'race' and culture and ethnicity feature strongly in current socio-political debates and policy making in Britain, occupying challenging territory for discussion of high profile cases. For example, the failure to successfully prosecute the murderers of a Black student, Stephen Lawrence, in 1993, the harassment by police of Delroy Lindo, a Black campaigner (2001), the deaths of Black prisoners in police custody, and other racially motivated attacks, have served to place the contentious issue of 'race' and institutional racism firmly on the political and social agenda. These and other cases

highlight that despite good intentions and legislation, racism is endemic in British society.

The prevalence of racism is supported by a significant amount of research undertaken by the Commission for Racial Equality, The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) and others. Partial and whole acceptance of the impact of racism can be found in government papers on education, such as The Rampton Report in 1981, the Swann Report (known as "Education for All") in 1985, the Macpherson Report in 1999, and the amendment to the Race Relations Act 2000. However, this analysis is not wholly accepted as an accurate analysis of British society.

It is argued here that 'race', racism, culture and ethnicity play an important role in the counselling relationship and in counselling training. Black people in Britain are subject to direct and indirect racism which ultimately affects their view of themselves and relationships in subtle and concrete ways. It is important therefore, to examine the roots of racism in Britain and thereby contextualize the contemporary framework that Black counsellors work in with their clients, black and white.

A brief historical summary of Blacks in Britain is included here charting some of the events that have affected black-white relationships since the sixteenth century. This is followed by an overview of some of the sociological and environmental dimensions of being black in Britain, providing a context and background to delineate the position of the Black counselling trainee. This overview is necessarily brief and cannot do justice to the wide ranging discourse that exists within the field. Reference has been made to the influence of some of the significant national and international theorists and their contribution to the race relations debate. The impact of racism on black peoples (and consequently white people) in Britain and its potential for affecting the self-esteem and relationships of individuals cannot be over-estimated and is explored throughout the research.

The research findings indicate that black counselling clients often refer to their experience of racism during their period of counselling. In some cases, it is a major contributory factor to the breakdown of their relationships at work and/or at home, and can also be the source of their distress leading to mental ill health. Therefore the historical and socio-political context of counsellor and client and its connection with the experience of racism has important implications for the training of all counsellors.

Historical context

Fernando (1991) asserts that racism is an integral part of Western culture. In Britain this racism was largely developed through the legacy of colonialism, slavery from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, and economic exploitation of the Third World thereafter.

> 'The devastation of Africa and India, the plunder of America, the imposition of opium on to an unwilling China, the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans, and the genocide of Native Americans and Australians were all justified in the name of racism.'
> (Fernando 1991 p.29)

In his comprehensive account of the history of Black people and racism in Britain, Fryer (1992) reminds us that black people have lived in Britain for more than 500 years, and have been born in Britain since 1505. Despite this, their presence has been seen as a threat, and questioned or resisted by white people.

Fryer, traces the roots of racism, pointing to the early examples of racially prejudiced thinking which was highly influential. These racist views declared black people to be sub-human, mentally and morally inferior to whites. In its simplest terms, blackness stood for all that was negative, bad, evil and fearful, while whiteness represented purity, goodness, light, perfection, (appendix 1). Fryer describes the consistently negative imagery used by travel writers and others in the seventeenth century, which depicts Africans as "devilish, monstrous, ape-like, lustful, treacherous, and given to cannibalism, inherently lazy, idle, ignorant, stupid, careless and ugly". One religious explanation and justification of racial prejudice was that blackness was a result of an inheritance of God's curse of Ham for looking at his father Adam when naked.

This imagery was reflected in much of English and European literature, poetry and art, and substantiated by 'scientific research' and observations made by prominent physicians, scientists, and philosophers of the time (see appendix 1). The historical investigations by Fryer (1992), Low (1996) and others describe how the fear, fascination and repulsion of blacks entered the psyche of the British.

Alongside these negative images were ideas developed from a strand of thought, probably initiated by Rousseau of the 'noble savage'. This presented the African as a hapless creature, ignorant, and innocent, who was transformed in works of art into a Black man with distinctly European features, thus indicating a strong desire to alter

the black man into the white man's image of normality, a concept which is used to explain colonialism as an act of mercy or mission. Low (1996) describes the tensions that existed in the imagery associated with savagery and distaste for blacks in her work 'White Skins/Black Masks', specifically through analysis of the literature produced by late nineteenth century writers Rudyard Kipling and Rider Haggard and their respective depictions of the life and peoples of India and Africa . Low shows how both writers seek to distance themselves from the two continents they write about, and attempt to romanticise the purity and nobility of the English whilst justifying their colonialist views of Empire.

The influence of scientific research, in particular the work of Darwin (Social Darwinism) Blumenbach (Phrenology) and Linnæus (Classification), espoused theories about the evolution of human beings, skull shape and size in relation to intelligence and capability, and the rank order of living creatures, which were used and developed by others in ways which clearly identified Blacks as inferior. Fryer (1992) shows how by the nineteenth century

> 'Virtually every scientist and intellectual...in Britain took it for granted that only people with white skin were capable of thinking and governing.'
> (p. 169)

Paradoxically, whites saw themselves as dominant and superior, and yet black people were to be feared. There were fears about the number of Blacks in Britain as early as the seventeenth century. A decree by Elizabeth I pledged to 'rid this land of all blackamoores' (Lago and Thompson 1996, p.5). There were fears about the dilution of racial purity through intermarriage, and general fears about the insurrection of Blacks on slave plantations or as servants banding together to riot in Britain (Fryer 1992).

These fears and concerns continue to be echoed throughout the history of Blacks in Britain by white politicians, philosophers and scientists, who seek to subsume their racist views through veiled logic usually appealing to the economic interests of the populace. It is not coincidental that racist movements and racist thinking gain their greatest hold during periods when the national economy is under pressure or with a rise in unemployment. As Cole (2004) notes, racism was institutionalised in a variety of ways. These included immigration restrictions for Jews and citizens from colonies, a move supported by the Trades Union movement as early as 1895. The concern that

without immigration constraints England might be eugenically doomed was being expressed during this time and has continued into the present.

Osler (1997) has observed that the history of 'race' relations in Britain has been characterised by government policy devised to control immigration and in particular to restrict the entry of black peoples.

The introduction of the 1948 Nationality Act allowed UK citizens and citizens of the Commonwealth to enter, settle and work in Britain. 1948 also marked the year in which 492 Commonwealth citizens from the West Indies arrived on SS *Empire Windrush*. The Searchlight handbook (2002) notes that there were fewer black settlers than those who settled from Ireland and Eastern Europe, but government administration was exploring ways of stopping 'coloured immigration'.

Responding to the labour shortage, the government sought to boost the economy by encouraging workers from the Commonwealth. Before this, the Aliens Acts of 1905, 1914 and 1919 had attempted to restrict the entry of immigrants. These acts were introduced against a background of post-war economic depression and unemployment, coupled with racist violence against Black settlers by white mobs.

The 1950s saw a continued rise in racial attacks and racial violence in which Blacks were attacked and discriminated against. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act was introduced ostensibly to improve race relations. In reality it restricted the rights of entry for Black people and labelled them as 'immigrants'.

1965 saw the introduction of the Race Relations Act, which prohibited discrimination in the public domain and penalised incitement to racial hatred. The Race Relations Board and the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants were also established in the same year. Also during this year, the Department of Education and Science endorsed the dispersal of minority ethnic children throughout schools in the towns and cities in order to prevent the concentration of minority ethnic groups.

Cole (2004) refers to the evidence uncovered by Bernard Coard that more black children than white were being excluded from school or being placed in separate education units. Further, that documentary evidence supported assumptions of black children being generally perceived as potentially threatening and in need of firm handling. As Cole (2004) relates, the amassed evidence supported the view that in the classroom, black children were 'disruptive, violent', and yet there was puzzlement about their educational inferiority or underachievement. This perception is

reminiscent of earlier colonial perceptions of black people, and persisted with the assumptions made about black people with mental health problems.

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 required potential settlers to provide evidence of prior direct parental, or grandparental, links with the United Kingdom. This act was rushed through Parliament in order to restrict the entry of Kenyan Asians. The message of this legislation was clearly racist and was denounced openly by some politicians and journalists as 'shameful', 'pandering to racialists', and so on (Fryer 1992).

1968 was also the year in which the Member of Parliament Enoch Powell fuelled further support for overt racism with his speeches which predicted 'rivers of blood', 'race' riots, an increase in crime and poverty, and the disintegration of British society. His speeches reflected the mood of growing anti-immigrant racist movements like the National Front, established in 1967. Powell's speech legitimised the expression of racist views once again clothed in polite logic and sanctioned by the established government. Eleven years later, Margaret Thatcher, a future prime minister, repeated in her pre-election speeches many of the themes highlighted by Powell. However, this was also a time which saw the second stage of the Race Relations Act, outlawing discrimination in housing, employment and the provision of services.

The 1971 Immigration Act, which came into force in 1973, more or less prevented all black immigration by highly restrictive measures. In the intervening period, under the dictatorship of Idi Amin, Uganda expelled over 25,000 Kenyan Asians. Britain was forced to accept these expelled British citizens. This settlement provided further motivation for racist movements to express their views.

1976 marked the Race Relations Act, which dealt with direct and indirect discrimination, and the founding of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), invested with powers to investigate discriminatory practice. The provisions of this act did not extend to the police. Whilst the Commission for Racial Equality clearly showed a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice, the converse of this was that immigration officers were conducting vaginal examinations to confirm the virginity of Asian women in 1979. In addition, the Rampton or Swann Committee was set up to investigate the underachievement of black children in the education system.

The 1981 British Nationality Act re-defined British citizenship, dividing it into three distinct categories. These were British, British Dependent Territories and British

Overseas. The act did not give automatic citizenship by birth in Britain. The Immigration Act of 1988 went further, making the right of entry of the wives and children of men already settled in the United Kingdom dependent on the men's ability to prove that they could support them.

Significantly, these events of the 1970s and 1980s were occurring in contrast to the introduction of employees and trainees of Social Work, Youth and Community, Health and Public Service to highly controversial Race Awareness Training (RAT) programmes, (See Tuckwell, 2002 p.125). These proved to be emotive, with an intentionally strong impact on participants.

The anti-immigration and anti-discrimination acts over the last fifty-five years demonstrate the ambivalent attitude of the nation and the government to the presence of black peoples. On one hand, white people are aware of a sense of fairness and responsibility and on the other they are fearful of domination or being over-run by minority ethnic inhabitants.

Sociological context

Recent debate on race relations in Britain has focussed on the concept of a multicultural society. There are indications that the notion of a multicultural society is being rejected in favour of one which promotes integration and downplays difference in favour of embracing the primacy of British values. The current (2004) Chair of the CRE (Trevor Phillips) and the Home Secretary (David Blunkett MP) seem to agree that the original concepts behind multiculturalism, celebrating and accommodating difference at the expense of societal cohesion, are redundant. However, the sociological analysis of a multicultural society, advanced by Rex (1997) seems to be supportive of current thinking about British society, albeit using rejected terminology.

According to John Rex:

> 'In a multicultural society we should distinguish between the public domain in which there is a single culture based upon the notion of equality between individuals and the private domain, which permits diversity between groups'.
> (p.218)

This belief in a society of equality is not realised by the majority of Black peoples in Britain. Blacks in Britain have been led to believe that they inhabit a meritocracy,

unlike the Blacks in United States and South Africa who have known and fought segregation.

The commentary that follows describes some of the aspects of living in Britain that contradict the notion of equality and have, are likely to have a direct impact on black people and their mental health.

Employment provides the potential for people to financially meet basic needs for themselves and their dependents, so starting with employment the factors for well-being and enhancing self-esteem can be discerned.

Employment

In 2001, ethnic minorities constituted 7.9% of the working population in Britain. The unemployment figure for white people of working age was 5.8%, but for people from minority ethnic groups it was 13% overall, with Pakistani and Bangladeshi people faring the worst at 20% and 23% respectively (National Statistics 2004). Black people also reported increased incidence of racial harassment at work and discrimination within the recruitment and selection process. Recurrent statistics show that black people were often more likely to earn less and be employed in the lowest paid jobs below their level of qualifications; this included graduates (CRE 2001). The 2001 national census data noted by Frith (2003) revealed that the unemployment rate amongst those who identified as mixed 'race' in the 16 to 24 age group was 'more than double that of their white counterparts'. Overall, ethnic minorities are more likely to experience discrimination at work, to be excluded from activities, to not be offered promotion, to be under-paid, and to be rejected at the point of application than their white counterparts. The demoralising effect of the above statistics is easily understood, proving that discrimination has taken place is difficult and in some cases impossible.

Housing

Shelter and a safe space is big factor in having a sense of mental well-being. Living in accommodation that is inadequate or insecure has a detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of a person. Satisfactory employment yields an income that enables autonomy, which in turn enhances self-esteem. Survey results show that people from ethnic minorities occupy the worst housing and live in the most deprived local authority districts. '70% of all people from ethnic minorities live in the 88 most deprived local authority districts.' (CRE 2001)

Reporting in 'The Independent' Frith (2003), noted that the 2001 national census results showed how overcrowding and poor housing conditions continue to be a severe problem experienced by ethnic minorities, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and asylum seekers in particular. This is contrary to the belief held by a minority about immigrants taking over housing and employment opportunities. It is well established that poor housing is linked to persistent health problems, including respiratory illness and mental health problems.

Survey evidence quoted by Dodd (2004) revealed that of 1000 people interviewed, one third stated that they did not want to work with or socialise with minority ethnic peoples. 41% of whites and 26% of minority ethnic people indicated a preference for living in an area with people from the same ethnic background. White Britons in the survey over-estimated the number of first generation immigrants residing in Britain as being in the region of 23%; the real figure is around 6%.

Criminal justice

Although reports of racial harassment and racial crimes are increasing, there is still evidence to suggest that there is a significant amount of under-reporting by those who experience it. It is estimated that only 5% of incidents are reported to the police (CRE 2001). This is in part due to a lack of confidence amongst black peoples that the police and statutory authorities that anything can or will do anything to alleviate the situation. Minority ethnic groups are over-represented in the prison population, making up 18% of the male and 24% of the female prison population, with black people alone accounting for 12% of the male and 18% of the female prison population (CRE 2001). Prison sentencing for young black prisoners is on average 14% higher. Here, interestingly, black does not refer to Asian prisoners. A 1994 report revealed that a quarter of the people stopped and searched were black, despite their only making up 5% of the population (Searchlight 2002).

Throughout the last century, black people in Britain have encountered the direct and indirect effects of racism either through legislation, discriminatory behaviour and practice or the direct harassment or violent attacks they have sustained.

The Institute of Race Relations reported that between February 1991 and April 2001, 44 black people were killed or are suspected to have been killed as a result of racially motivated attacks (Institute of Race Relations 2002b).

In 1992, for instance, ten of these deaths were recorded. A survey referred to by the Catholic charity CAFOD (Catholic agency for overseas development) showed that of 400 minority ethnic families interviewed in Preston, 74% reported that at least one member of the family had experienced racial harassment in the previous two years.

Racial harassment and attacks were not limited to the general public. Police officers were also implicated in a number of serious assault complaints and 'unexplained' sudden deaths of prisoners held in custody.

The publication of the Macpherson Report (1999) marked the first time institutional racism was accepted and defined as a reality. The report declared the Metropolitan police force was institutionally racist. This is in contrast to the 1981 Scarman inquiry into the riots in Brixton, which had rejected this notion.

The Macpherson Report (1999) made 70 recommendations with specific reference to police procedures, the judicial system, education, racism awareness training in public services including the police, and wider community responsibility.

Macpherson also recommended a review of recruitment and retention of minority ethnic staff within institutions. The report has led to some re-focusing on tackling racism in all aspects of life in Britain. The government has challenged the public and the private sector to respond to the recommendations of the report with clear evidence of action.

Less than three years after the publication of the Macpherson Report, the Institute of Race Relations has indicated its disappointment with progress made, suggesting that in many ways government has a complacent attitude, that the policies adopted are superficial and ineffective, and, worse still that some measures have compounded the problems experienced by black communities. Examples of this can be seen in the policies adopted on asylum seekers, the focus on 'persistent offenders' and prison sentencing, and police 'stop and search' powers.

Government response to racial disturbances

Government inquiry reports were commissioned into the riots and racial disturbances occurring in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the summer of 2001. David Blunkett, Member of Parliament and Home Secretary for England, responded to these in a number of speeches in December of that year, reflecting on the outcomes of the reports and outlining his ideas on citizenship and British culture. He stated that more attention needed to be paid to the 'weaknesses of political citizenship in the UK'. Blunkett claimed

> 'Race, language and the bonds of citizenship are among the most profound issues any society has to deal with'
> (The Guardian: 14 Dec 2001)

Blunkett focused on the proficient use of the English language as being a cohesive factor in communities, enabling its members to work towards an understanding of 'collective citizenship'. These and other quoted phrases from a speech made in the same month referred to the need for an understanding and adoption of 'norms of acceptability for those who come into our home'.

His expressed desire to bring about community cohesion was derided by his critics who have interpreted his arguments as racist, diversionary or misled. They argue that the causes of the disturbances in the cities were largely due to social deprivation and the rise in fascist movements and racial attacks in those particular areas.

Despite his denial, Blunkett has been accused of making remarks reminiscent of earlier ones made by Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher (Fryer 1992), in his reference to the proposition that children of asylum seekers awaiting confirmation of status be educated separately, thus avoiding 'swamping the local school'. Similarly, the 'cricket test' proposed by Norman Tebbit is to some extent echoed by Blunkett's desire for open and exclusive declarations of allegiance to Britain from immigrants seeking citizenship. Eleven years earlier, Tebbit, a Tory Member of Parliament, wondered aloud whether British Asian immigrants would cheer for England or their country of origin in a cricket match should the situation arise.

It is important here to identify how 'race', ethnicity and culture have been elided into a discussion about citizenship in political terms, and how the way forward is seen as the achievement of some kind of cultural assimilation, despite Blunkett's denial of this as being a central tenet of this thinking. He argues that diversity as it exists in Britain is 'a source of strength vitality and pride' and yet talks about 'our home' in a

proprietorial way, implying that those who enter this 'home' by birth or by immigration are guests unless and until they adopt behaviours and values that are recognisably British. In an interview for the Independent on Sunday, Andrew Grice (2001) quotes Blunkett thus:

> 'We have norms of acceptability and those who come into our home – for that is what it is – should accept those norms just as we would have to do if we went elsewhere.'

In speeches and reports made in that year, Blunkett referred to his perception that the potential and real damage to community relations was mainly caused by those who seemed to be unwilling to abide by these norms citing arranged marriages, genital mutilation, and the lack of English speaking in homes as contributory factors. Blunkett seemed to place less emphasis on the reality and impact of poverty, and the effects of direct and institutional racism on minority ethnic communities. The ideas outlined by Blunkett have a connection to the definition of new racism referred to earlier (see page 27), which states that cultural heritage is less important. 'Otherness' is threatening; therefore, the removal or minimising of otherness is deemed safer and leads to greater cohesion.

In order to feel 'at home', black people need to feel welcome and accepted. The current legislation, and the conditions of black communities in Britain as described above, indicates that they experience a life which leads them to believe that they are not welcome and not 'at home'. It is argued here and elsewhere - in the work of Littlewood and Lipsedge (1989) and Fernando (1991) for instance - that this ultimately has an effect on the mental health of Black people.

During the second half of the last century and currently, the media and some high profile as well as influential politicians and a Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police have described Black people in Britain as being mostly associated with crime, drug-related offences and moral decline, poor or falling educational standards, and psychotic behaviour. This does not seem very different to the images from the eighteenth and nineteenth century by which Fryer (1992) found.

Fernando (1991) contends that

> '...the British have never held a favourable attitude towards the immigrant who chooses to migrate to Britain.'
> (p.31 & 32)

The term 'immigrant' is often incorrectly applied to people who were previously regarded as British subjects, and in the main is used to indicate that they are not white.

Health

The Commission for Racial Equality research shows that the infant mortality rate amongst African Caribbean and Pakistani children is 100% higher than it is for white children. There is a greater incidence of diagnosed ill-health amongst minority ethnic people, especially diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Black mental health issues

Bean and Rassaby (see Ratna and Wheeler 1995, p.136) noted that although ethnic minorities in Britain constituted five per cent of the population at that time, 49% of those forcibly hospitalised by the police under section 136 of the Mental Health Act came from minority groups. Half of those hospitalised were women, deemed to be behaving in a 'disruptive' manner (p136).

Inconsistency of diagnosis and unequal treatment is a familiar pattern of mental health services for black people. In an interview with forensic psychiatrist Dr Ndegwa, Braid (1999) was told: 'It is a brave black man who goes to his white GP and tells him he has a mental health problem.'

Braid also discovered that black communities were turning to traditional or spiritual healers and to the church for mental solace and cure rather than the National Health Service (NHS) system, out of fear of possible incarceration in a mental hospital and/or being prescribed heavy doses of psychotropic drugs. Whilst some black people were getting the help they need by resorting to these traditional healing alternatives, others might be delaying their recovery by resisting formal medical help within the NHS (Braid 1999).

A survey of 116 people between 16 and 74 years of age, living in private households in Britain was conducted and the EMPIRIC report (2002) was prepared based on the findings. The survey sample was drawn from a previous quantitative study conducted in 1993. The EMPIRIC report showed that the rate of diagnosis of schizophrenia and psychosis amongst African Caribbean and Irish people is disproportionately high. Black men are ten times more likely than white men to be diagnosed as schizophrenic and are more likely to be sectioned and hospitalized, (BBC 1999). Research conducted by Nazroo (1997) indicates similar findings. A survey conducted by Wilson (1997) found that black mental health patients were more likely

to be treated with psychotropic drugs (95%) and less likely to receive or be offered counselling or psychotherapy. The survey also revealed that black people interviewed felt that their culture was ignored (52%) and that they were treated differently by mental health professionals because they were black.

The compilers of the EMPIRIC report (2002) also identified that the research evidence found a wide variation in the way that different ethnic groups described their mental health and ill health. This result indicating that standardised tests and testing instruments used to diagnose mental ill health may not be reliable. Through its use of the Clinical Interview Schedule (CIS), an instrument used to assess Common Mental Disorder (CMD), EMPIRIC report also revealed that South Asian people in the United Kingdom showed low rates of 'Common Mental Disorder' (CMD) and hypothesised that this may be due to their extended social support network.

A report prepared by Reiss (2001), quotes from a NHS Executive review of psychotherapy services in England, which identified that 'people of black and minority ethnic origin, lesbians and gay men, in the recruitment of people with chronic illness and older people were less likely to receive psychotherapy'.

Research based in Scotland (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2001), inquiring into the counselling services available to Asian people showed that there was a need for agencies to invest greater effort to recruit a more culturally diverse workforce and to have a greater awareness of the cultural needs of their clients. This report notes that these findings have implications for the in-house training provided for counsellors and of course for counselling training in general.

As shown earlier, racism permeates British society and therefore has a direct and/or indirect impact on all black people and consequently on white people. Patel and Fatimilehin (1999) point to the detrimental effect of racism on parents, and how this ultimately affects their children and their relationships with their children. The authors question how parents who have experienced racism, and as a result may feel demoralised, frustrated, distrustful, and hypervigilant in the face of possible racist attack, can easily rise to the challenge of participating fully and with confidence in the positive development of their children's ethnic identity. The cumulative experience of economic hardship, poor housing, lack of employment opportunities and education difficulties is hard to overcome. They may also have to live with the threat of racial harassment or indeed have been attacked; it is little wonder that their

view of their future prospects may be bleak. Uwahemu (2004), a practising psychotherapist, describes how she developed a 'proxy self' in which she ignored and/or hid her cultural heritage as a way of dealing with oppression, having learnt from an early age that this was a survival strategy that her parents had adopted in order to be accepted in Britain.

Patel and Fatimilehin (1999) conclude that current psychological models that seek to explain and help people experiencing mental health problems such as post traumatic stress disorder and depression are in many ways inadequate for the needs of black people. This is because the models do not take sufficient account of the socio-political context of the individual, and focus too much on their individual experience, locating the problem the person is experiencing as having a discrete situational source. This conclusion is supported in the more recent EMPIRIC (2002) study.

Patel and Fatimilehin (1999) assert that some of the feelings that contribute to a mental health problem in black people are directly related to their experience of racism. Such feelings as a decreased sense of optimism, powerlessness, and lowered self-expectations, acceptance of the negative stereotyping associated with being black (internalised racism/oppression) can be attributed to the cumulative effect of racism.

The authors note the special case of 'double jeopardy' for black women who are oppressed by the oppressed, namely white women, black men and other black women. They note the conclusions drawn by Root and Hine (see Patel and Fatimilehin 1999) that, as a defence against this oppression, black women withdraw into silence. However Patel and Fatimilehin (1999) warn that:

> 'It is the silencing of those who suffer racism that facilitates the use of oppressive psychological explanations and tools for intervention'.
>
> (p.62)

This withdrawal into silence is particularly pertinent to my research findings for two reasons. The first is that the majority of counsellors operating in Britain are female, and this seems to apply to black practitioners too. This research evidence notes that many of the counsellors used silence as a means of 'survival' and as a way of escaping from the racism they perceived in their training group work. The second is that if women counsellor trainees are remaining silent in their training programmes in the face of racism, there are implications for their work in general and with black

clients in particular. This leads to a further question about how changes in counselling practice and training may subtly be made to explore this.

If Black women counsellors perceive silence as a coping strategy for dealing with racism and oppression, it is possible that they might convey that silence is a good coping strategy subtly to their clients. Will this perpetuate and validate the notion of the 'proxy self' indicated by Uwahemu (2004), as the safest way of repelling and surviving racism? It is not my intention to place the responsibility for change on Black women, but this does highlight a potential cycle of damage. This can only change when white mental health professionals and academics acknowledge their own racist attitudes and practice, and devote time and effort to documenting and challenging this instead of leaving the responsibility to marginalised Blacks (Patel and Fatimilehin 1999).

Eurocentric bias in mental health practice

> 'The overwhelming bias towards the use of traditional, Western models of psychological health and psychological and psychiatric practice is a testimony to one of the most blatant, yet often covert,forms of racism in the mental health system'.
> (Patel and Fatimilehin 1999, p.63)

Criticism of the misguided reliance on the wholesale application of Eurocentric models of counselling and psychotherapy to work with black clients is steadily growing, as the work of Lago and Thompson (1996), Fernando (1991), Thomas (1992;1995), Moodley (2000b), and others shows. This policy is not only misguided but perpetuates racism. Eurocentric models of psychology makes assumptions about the mental health of black people often linked to a deficit model (Ridley 1995). These models often assume black peoples' 'inferiority', poor intellectual capacity and unpredictable behaviour; ideas that are rooted in unsubstantiated theories evolved by white racialists. This has led in many cases to inappropriate diagnoses and a misuse of psychotropic medication to control observed symptoms defined as 'abnormal'. It has also led to the over-representation of black people in psychiatric hospitals, as cited earlier.

Fernando (1991) describes a likely scenario showing how the exclusive use of a Eurocentric model of psychology and an unwillingness on the part of the white practitioner to acknowledge the black person's experience of racism can collide to the 'patient's' detriment. In an assessment interview between a black patient and a white

practitioner the black person may withhold information about self and family in order to avoid misinterpretation or racist stereotyping. Meanwhile, the white professional interprets the patient's reticence as 'hostile' or lacking in internal insight. Consequently, there is a lack of rapport between the two people, based on mistrust and misunderstanding on both sides. More importantly, this might lead the white professional to conclude that the patient is not suitable or motivated for treatment and requires high dose medication or seclusion (p 39).

Some mental health services and organisations are beginning to draw on models of African and Asian psychology in their work with black peoples (e.g.Nafsiyat, Coventry Black Mental Health). Research and report evidence shows that black people have reduced access to the full range of mental health services and yet are over-represented in it numerically as patients. (Mind 2002) The predominant use of Western psychological interventions to help black people with mental health problems may not be the best way to make progress. This has implications for the training of all mental health practitioners and of course the training of counsellors.

Education

According to the 2001 United Kingdom census (National Statistics online 2004), ethnic minorities accounted for 7.9% of the United Kingdom population, of which Indians form the largest minority ethnic group (18%), Pakistanis constitute 13% and Black Caribbeans 10%.

Statistical evidence gathered shows that in terms of education, health, housing, unemployment and work, those of the minority ethnic community fare worse and also have low expectations of better or equal treatment.

Minority ethnic pupils account for 11.5% of the school population in England. In education the achievements of primary and secondary minority ethnic pupils was significantly worse than white children, despite in some cases entry into the education system with assessed high ability.

In 1999, with the exception of Indian pupils' results, Black pupils' achievement at GCSE was between 13-20% lower than white pupils' overall. The rate of exclusion for African Caribbean pupils, many of whom were initially assessed as being of above average ability and higher, was four to six times higher than white pupils (CRE 2001).

Despite the effects of globalisation and media influence it seems that change in some places tends to be slow or minimal in educating young people. Pockets of ignorance

still exist as shown by the report prepared by Cole and Stuart (2003), based on their small scale study of the experience of black, British-born Asian and overseas new teachers in Sussex and Kent (UK) primary and secondary schools. The findings suggest an amount of 'covert racism and xenophobia' amongst some of the students. Examples were given of students who admired civility and 'behaved like ladies and gentlemen' but seemed to think that the teachers 'were like animals', making 'animal noises', asking black and white overseas teachers to 'go back to their own country' asking whether they rode on elephants and assuming that 'all Africans still lived in mud huts'.

Sheets (2003), providing similar evidence, asserts that despite the United States agenda since the 1970s of including diversity in teacher training programmes there is little evidence that this has improved the lot of the children it concerns.

> 'Children of color(sic) are either seen as a low priority or 'treated' along the lines of a deficit model which usually blames them or their parents...reinforcing white superiority'. (p.112)

Sheets claims that training programmes with multicultural course experiences do not, in themselves, bring about change. Like Cole (2004), Sheets argues for a radical shift in thinking and behaviour, where teachers see their role as that of 'change agents', encouraging young people to explore and possibly to challenge the structures within society that oppress, denying social justice and democracy.

As the Black counsellor participants in this research accessed their training in a higher education institution, it was appropriate to examine available research documenting the opportunities and experiences of black students in Britain. Research completed by Bhattacharyya, Ison, and Blair (2003), and Connor, et al. (2003), shows that participation rates of black students in Higher Education is on the increase from 12% in 1996/97 to 13% in 2000/01 within Higher Education institutions and that they constitute 15.2% of the undergraduate student population, (this includes Further education and Open University). However, these encouraging figures may belie some important data about the levels of dissatisfaction amongst black students.

Connor, et al. (2003) found that the accounts of students interviewed indicated a low incidence of racial discrimination. The authors speculated that this result might have

been due to under-reporting or because of the 'sensitive nature of the issues concerning individuals' (p92).

This echoes the work of Bird (1996), who argues that the problems experienced by black students are often not recognised. There is also a tendency to ignore or dismiss the issues raised and their problems as exaggeration or related to specific 'cultural values and attitudes'. Whilst there may be some truth in this, there is also a significant amount of research that highlights a number of factors affecting the quality of the learning experience for black students.

The reluctance to research the experience of black students could be an unwillingness to face some unpalatable truths about racism in higher education. Alongside this may be some genuine nervousness on the part of white researchers to venture into a sensitive area where they might be accused of racism in conducting such research at all. For instance, Constantine-Simms (1995) rebuts the arguments of Cashmore and Troyna (1981), insisting forcefully that only Black researchers should research the Black experience in education, challenging white researchers and to focus on the impact of white racism on society in general as an alternative remit.

Despite societal racism, lower expectations, inequality of access, and the potential for higher rates of school exclusion, Modood and Acland (1998) report that ethnic minorities, with some exceptions, are well represented in higher education today. They conclude that there are two main reasons for this; firstly, the economic ambition of migrant parents and families for the student, and secondly: their belief in the value of education for upward mobility and respectability (Modood and Acland 1998, pp37-8).

Entry into higher education for black students can be unpredictable, with some obstacles. Whilst a similar journey might be reported by white students from working class origins, the additional factors of minority ethnic disadvantage and racism may not apply.

Research evidence from a small study conducted by Acland and Azmi (1998) at a higher education institution in 1993 and 1996 showed that black students were disappointed by the curriculum on offer, which did not reflect cultural or equal opportunities issues. This was highly relevant, as around nine per cent of the undergraduate student population of the institution identified themselves as black. There were also few staff members of minority ethnic groups.

The findings of Acland and Azmi were to some extent echoed in the work of Allen (1998), who argued in favour of Brienburg's description of 'black scepticality', an observed perspective of black students in higher education. 'Black scepticality' refers to the way in which black students continuously assess the relevance of their experience in higher education against their history and culture, and the interactions and ethos of the institution. Their observations would consider aspects such as the staffing, and, where possible, the curriculum, reflecting black culture, and the clarity and range of assessment procedures. In addition, post qualification employment, research areas and interests, black student support and guidance networks within the institution, and equal opportunities training for staff development, outreach work in black communities might be some of the useful indicators for the sceptical black student to monitor.

Allen (1998) states that:

> 'Black scepticality interrogates the legitimacy of institutional knowledge claims in the light of one's own lived reality. It can be viewed as the partial unmasking of Eurocentric and racist ideologies, subtle and unsubtle, ingrained in higher educational structures.'
>
> (p.91)

In their 'scepticality', black students look for the evidence to support the claims of many higher education institutions by their policies of anti-racism and equal opportunities.

What is discovered, as Leicester (1993) indicates, is that this rhetoric is sometimes empty. This is particularly likely in curriculum areas 'like continuing education, which boasts a liberal, progressive democratic tradition' (p.31). The more recent study conducted by Connor, et al. (2003) highlights the overall percentage growth in minority ethnic participation in higher education (except for students from Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups) and refers to the previously discussed limiting factors that affect black students and their completion rates, thus indicating that some aspects such as discriminatory student admission practices, student finance difficulties, the low recruitment of minority ethnic staff, and feelings of hostility and isolation within an academic culture, persist.

Implications for counsellors

Given that qualified black counsellors may also hold other professional qualifications such as in nursing or social work, or as medical doctors, they may have a significant role to play in the monitoring and treatment of black people with mental health

problems. This is the case in general for all practitioners, but some black practitioners do believe that they have a particular responsibility to aforementioned circumstances of black people into consideration and, based on their understanding of the impact of racism, to meet the needs of their clients and/or patients in different and more appropriate ways.

CHAPTER 2

THE COUNSELLING CONTEXT

The work of this chapter is presented in the form of a literature review. The foundation and subsequent development of counselling and psychotherapy practice and training in Britain are described and discussed. There will be a discussion about the necessity of the inclusion of training that addresses issues of 'race' and culture in this chapter. Whilst it is present in some training courses my research findings indicate that the delivery and content of this provision is often inappropriate and usually inadequate.

Background to counselling development

Halmos (1965), seeking to reach a definition, describes counselling as having a common ancestor with pastoral guidance - the giving of spiritual solace and that it has a common aim, which is 'health, sanity, a state of unspecified virtue, even a state of grace, or merely a return to the virtues of the community, adjustment. He defines it as - a talking therapy - 'treatment through the clarification of subjective experiences and meanings'

Bond and Shea (1997) have indicated that, originally, counsellors may have seen themselves as non-establishment figures. This may in part be due to the term counsellor. Frank Parsons, a social campaigner working on behalf of the urban poor, first used the term counsellor to describe his work. It is suggested that Parsons established the first counselling centre in 1908 (Feltham 1995). Carl Rogers, a foremost leader of the Client-centred or Person-centred approach to counselling, adopted the title of counsellor because he was forbidden to call himself a psychotherapist, a term reserved in the United States for medical practitioners. Other definitions associated with the word counselling embrace advice giving as an important aspect of the work of a counsellor. The roles of debt counsellor, financial counsellor, careers counsellor, are part of common parlance in Britain. This use of the world counsellor may have something to do with the wish to imbue these and other such roles with the philanthropic, listening, caring qualities associated with the counsellor and counselling work referred to in this research. However, in terms of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, notions of advice giving are eschewed in favour of facilitating individual autonomy, self-advocacy and empowerment

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, previously known as the British Association for Counselling (BAC), founded in 1977, defined the overall aim of counselling as the provision of

> '...an opportunity for the client to work towards living in a way he or she experiences as more satisfying and resourceful. Counselling may be concerned with developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insight and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict or improving relationships with others. The counsellor's role is to facilitate the client's work in ways which respect the client's values, personal resources and capacity for choice within his or her cultural context.'
> (BAC: 1996, 3.3.1)

The BAC code of ethics and practice for counsellors (1996), distinguishes between the use of counselling skills, and counselling. Counselling skills can be used and offered by anyone and in a wide range of professional and personal relationships. For example, within the medical profession, in education, interpersonal relationships and management work, neighbours, friends and so on.

Counselling and the counselling relationship however, is a 'deliberately undertaken contract' between client and counsellor with 'clearly agreed boundaries and commitment to privacy and confidentiality' (op.cit. 3.3.2)

The membership of the BACP includes counselling and psychotherapy practitioners as well as those who have an interest in counselling and counselling skills and use counselling in their work and life.

In April 2002, the BACP replaced its codes of ethics and practice for counsellors, counselling skills trainers and counselling supervisors with an 'Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy'. The new framework offered no distinction between counselling and counselling skills and did not define what counselling or psychotherapy was. Its focus is on providing broad based principles and values and guidance for all member practitioners of counselling and psychotherapy, as well as outlining complaints procedures. The BACP identified a commitment to the following fundamental values of counselling and psychotherapy

> '...Respecting human rights and dignity; ensuring the integrity of practitioner-client relationships; enhancing the quality of professional knowledge and its application; alleviating personal distress and suffering; fostering a sense of self that is meaningful to the person(s) concerned; increasing personal effectiveness;

> enhancing the quality of relationships between people; appreciating the variety of human experience and culture; striving for the fair and adequate provision of counselling and psychotherapy services. These values are underpinned by the ethical principles of fidelity, autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and self-respect which govern the ethical decision making of the counselling or psychotherapy practitioner.' (BACP: 2001)

It is clear that the BACP's move away from the more specific and particular codes of ethics which provided rules to the more general 'Framework' is reflective of the broader application of counselling within all fields of work, whilst incorporating an implicit message to all practitioners that the organisation itself has evolved and recognises its members as mature autonomous professionals.

Counselling and psychotherapy – is there a difference?

The terms 'counselling' and 'psychotherapy' are used interchangeably in this research. Despite the arguments outlined by Harvie-Clark (1991), who suggests that some of the difference lies in length and depth of training (in some cases, the training is longer for psychotherapy), there is inconclusive evidence that there is a significant difference between the two in terms of practice or use of theoretical models of therapy.

It is argued that psychotherapists tend to deal with clients who have been assessed with deeper and prolonged problems. The type of treatment offered by psychotherapists is usually offered in a medical setting and may include medication and medical referral. There is often reference in psychotherapy to the terms 'treatment' and 'patient'; such terms seem to be absent from counselling where the emphasis is on the words 'client' and 'relationship'.

Totton (2003), Thorne (1999), Nelson-Jones (2000) and others assert that there is no distinct difference between counselling and psychotherapy, save in some cases salary differentials (psychotherapists are paid more), and some workplace settings.

The BAC maintained that there was no generally accepted distinction between counselling and psychotherapy (Thorne 1999, Patterson 1980 and others), and asserted that as the two shared common approaches and theoretical foundations, it was reasonable to use the terms interchangeably. Seventy-five percent of its practitioner members refer to themselves as counsellors (McDevitt, 2000). In September 2000 the BAC incorporated psychotherapy into its title, becoming the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Much of the

criticism for this move came from those who wished to retain the distinctiveness of the counsellor, and saw counselling as more radical and less to do with the increasing push towards professionalisation, elitism, exclusivity, yearning for status and medicalisation of therapy. McDevitt (2000) enumerated many of the arguments involved in this debate. As Bond and Shea (1997) remarked...'The idea of a profession is seen as antagonistic to the 'spirit' or 'ethos' of counselling' (p.521).
The issue of the inclusiveness of counselling as an activity versus the potential move towards labelling counselling as an exclusive activity and profession was and is an aspect fiercely debated by those against the 'professionalisation' of the practice of counselling.
In its early development, counselling was viewed by its exponents as a broad church encompassing lay practitioners and trained ones in a variety of fields. To some extent, the approach or orientation adopted by individual counselling and psychotherapy practitioners is an indication of their personal philosophy and worldview. Below is a brief summary of the three main theoretical schools from which approaches to therapy are derived.

Counselling and Psychotherapy - theoretical foundations

The three main schools or 'forces' of theory for the Western practice of counselling and psychotherapy emanate from the:

(i) The Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic approach (the first force)

(ii) The Cognitive/Cognitive-Behavioural approach (the second force)

(iii) The Humanistic-Existential Approach (the third force).

These approaches or orientations, briefly described below, have evolved from theorists in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and United States.
The Psychodynamic approach has its roots in the work of Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Carl Jung and Donald Winnicott. Through relationship with their 'patients' or clients, the psychodynamic therapist seeks to work towards finding meaning in their history and experience through analysis of such aspects as their childhood development, their defences, dreams, the unconscious, and symbolic attachment to significant others in their relationships.
The Cognitive-Behavioural approach, used most often in clinical psychology is an approach developed by Ivan Pavlov, Burrhus Skinner, John Watson, Aaron Beck, and others. The focus of this approach is to work with the 'patient' towards altering irrational beliefs and behaviours through systematic re-learning and re-programming

of behaviour and thinking. This involves an appeal to the rationality of the patient or client and the application of scientific methods and evaluation in order to assess success of the treatment.

The Humanistic approach developed by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Gerard Egan, Fritz Perls and others generally refers to the recipient of therapy as a 'client' rather than a patient, and places emphasis on the client's own ability to self-actualise, and believes that this can be facilitated through the relationship between the therapist and the client. The client is seen as the expert and is encouraged to explore their phenomenological experiences and feelings in the present in a supportive environment. By doing this the client can arrive at conclusions for themselves about how they should proceed and what they need to do to heal themselves. Existential counselling and psychotherapy approaches stem from the theoretical philosophical work of Sartre, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Kierkegaard. Therapists such as Yalom, Van Deurzen (2001) and Vontress (1988) have used existential philosophy to engage in therapeutic dialogue with clients about their values, their predicaments, the limitations and constraints they encounter and finding ways to live more meaningfully, whilst paying attention to their spiritual, political, cultural and environmental context. In his work on existential cross-cultural counselling, Vontress (1988) argues for an increased focus on the spiritual, cultural and environmental context of clients rather than on developing particular techniques and strategies. He reasoned that the variety of humankind demands that clients be viewed holistically, and that there is little point in seeking to meet the needs of the diverse range of clients through ethnic matching.

> 'Counsellors and clients share something in common,
> the universal culture. They also share the same destiny,
> death, which places the relationship on a very high plane.
> There is not time for petty pursuits.'
> (p.76)

Feltham (1995; 1997b) estimates that there are in excess of 300 different theoretical approaches to counselling and psychotherapy, which could be organised into eight groupings derived from the three major schools. For instance, Gestalt Psychotherapy theory and practice and Transactional Analysis draw ideas from the Psychodynamic and Humanistic school of psychology.

The historical foundations of counselling

Those currently documenting the history of counselling in Britain are mostly in agreement that its growth began in the 1960s, and was imported from the United States. Halmos (1965) suggests that counselling in Britain emerged as a way of satisfying an obligation to attend to the misery and unhappiness of the individual whilst maintaining a scientific and secular distance. He predicted the increase in interest and government subsidy in the 'professionalisation of personal helping' (p.29) he contends that this has occurred partly in response to a drive to depoliticise social concerns, but also to move away from the stereotyped imagery and function of social responsibility. He insists that this 'professionalisation' is a form of camouflage for counsellors, affirming their work as real.

Halmos' inquiry into the data available revealed that in 1961 there were approximately 2400 doctors, of whom some were making use of psychotherapeutic techniques although the predominant methods were physical. Simultaneously, there were approximately 400 psychotherapists and psychologists and 2700 social workers.

Resistance to taking an in interest in people's feelings, motivations and personality problems were present even then. The 'no-nonsense' objectors who saw this as a preoccupation with individual inadequacy did not deter the growth in this 'industry'. The 1961 data quantified professional social work membership of one kind or another at 5386, offering a miscellany of counselling expertise. This figure was lower than that shown earlier in a 1951 census, where four times as many people claimed to be engaging in counselling of some sort, with or without training or qualifications.

Although the size of this group is relatively small their influence was huge, charting a major social change. The haste in the West to pursue achievements in scientific and technological advance was countered by what Halmos describes as 'secularised and institutionalised philanthropy' (p.46). The increased number of counsellors was connected to increased affluence and prosperity. He notes in the 1960s that the United States has three and a half times as many counsellors per population than Britain.

He predicted in 1965 that:

> 'As our standards of physical amenities 'grow beyond the dreams of avarice', more and more recognition and love, will go to those who will be able to supply the vital non-material

> amenities and comforts of existence. Consequently more and more able and ambitious men and women will seek qualification and employment in the counselling services and more and more of the counselling morality and etiquette will be disseminated to become an essential part of society's morals and conventions. Leadership will go to those who think of new and more effective ways of reducing anguish without at the same time reducing alertness.'
>
> (p. 47)

Halmos was right; Persaud (1996) observes that 2.5 million people identified themselves as using counselling or counselling skills as a major part of their work. 270,000 were working in the voluntary sector using counselling and 30,000 people were earning their living as counsellors.

The first full-time counsellor training courses were established at the Universities of Reading and Keele in 1965 up to the early 1990s (Dryden and Thorne 1993). Use of the North American training model, appointing specialised counselling practitioners to deliver counselling training has largely prevailed since the early 1990s. This is a marked a change from earlier practice in Britain where, up until the late 1980s, counselling training was provided in higher education and elsewhere in an ad hoc way by a range of related practitioners, including clinical psychologists, social workers, and leading members of the church.

As early as 1982, Bolger warned that the quality of training would determine the effectiveness of counselling practice in the country, and that this could be compromised by what he refers to as 'competing therapeutic systems' arguing at this early stage against the core theoretical model approach to counselling training. The core theoretical method of training focuses on the theory of one counselling approach in its delivery with minimal reference to other orientations as a point or points of comparison.

Contemporary practice of counselling and psychotherapy

Increasingly, people in Britain are turning towards 'talking therapies' such as counselling and psychotherapy to resolve personal crises and relationship issues. There are indications that up to half a million people are accessing counselling and psychotherapy services privately, in the workplace, through a medical referral, and, more recently, cyber-therapeutic support through internet access.

Summerskill (2000) and Coldridge and Mickelborough (2003) quote the Royal College of General Practice survey which found that 51% of GP practices in England

and Wales were offering counselling compared to 31% in 1992. In spite of this apparent vote of confidence by a large number of medical General Practitioners, counselling and psychotherapy has an image problem.

Media depictions of counselling and psychotherapy vary from the realistic to unhelpful caricatures. More frequently, advice columnists use the language and terminology of counselling and psychotherapy in their responses to the letters they receive. Generally though, positive images of counselling and psychotherapy are countered by criticism and suspicion from a range of sources including medical professionals and experts in psychiatry and psychological sciences.

Thomas Szasz (1979), an eminent professor of psychiatry, insists that psychotherapy is nothing more than a metaphorical treatment; practitioners coerce their patients into different behaviours through the use of religion, rhetoric and repression. He defines psychotherapy as follows:

> 'In short, psychotherapy is secular ethics. It is the religion of the formally irreligious - with its language, which is not Latin but medical jargon; with its codes of conduct, which are not ethical but legalistic; and with its theology, which is not Christianity but positivism.'
>
> (p.10)

Rice (2000a) echoes Szasz's opinion, noting that in some quarters counselling and psychotherapy have been referred to as the new religion, with counsellors adopting a similar role to the religious elder or community leader. L. Stevens (2002) points to the expense of psychotherapy and the lack of evidence of its effectiveness. He also questions the notion that lengthy psychological training and extensive qualifications are a true indicator of expertise or competence. Quoting from his personal experience and interviews with qualified therapists, he remains unconvinced that therapists possess any more competence than a friend who is willing to listen.

Some of the criticism relating to counselling and psychotherapy focuses on the fact that it is largely an unregulated occupation and industry, with little historical empirical evidence of its effectiveness.

Other critics, such as Masson (1990), Howard (1996) and Furedi (2003), highlight the increased high dependence on counselling as emergency first aid for disasters and tragedies. The critics claim that the stoical response to life changes and major events have been replaced by individualised 'victimhood' and fragility. Furedi (2003) argues against the 'therapeutic imperative' and the pervasive use of the language of sickness

encouraging individuals to attribute blame of their inner distress or circumstances on bad parenting or specific relationships. He is critical of encouragement to find the solutions to problems from within the self, rather than identifying the ways in which society and communities can solve problems in life together.

The emphasis on personal empowerment within the philosophy of counselling has led to its extensive use within the voluntary sector and the women's movement. It has been seen as a powerful means of seeking social change, and many of its ideas and phrases have entered the language of the general public and been reflected in the media. Student-centred learning, child-centred rearing, people-centred public services are all examples of the ways in which counselling practice and vocabulary have entered the language and way of life in Britain. An interest in listening, developing assertiveness, asking people to make their own choices rather than dictating to them, are further examples which show how the tenets of counselling have become part of British culture.

A body of evidence of the effectiveness of counselling and psychotherapy is growing, as the Department of Health report (2003), King et al (2000), McLeod (2001a), Tolley and Rowland (1995) and others show, but are not substantial when compared to other more traditional forms of psychological intervention. The challenge of accumulating substantial qualitative and quantitative evidence in support of counselling effectiveness is significant. Counselling and psychotherapy operate in a wide range of settings, (voluntary, medical, statutory public health, private practice) where practitioners may have dual roles, and do not quantify or monitor their work in easily measurable ways.

As Summerskill (2000) notes, in a climate of cynicism about the value of counselling and psychotherapy there are plenty of 'horror' stories about malpractice and psychological damage from hapless clients presented in newspaper and magazine articles. Persaud (1996) and Ironside (2003a ;2003b) provide similar examples. There tend to be fewer publicised examples of people who have been helped by counselling and psychotherapy appearing in the media. This may be because it implicates satisfied recipients in something that is still regarded with a high level of scepticism and at worst is seen as the unnecessary luxury of the 'worried well' and deprives them of anonymity.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), and the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) are recognised as the two major

counselling and psychotherapy professional bodies in the British Isles. In the absence of government legislation on these matters, the BACP and UKCP have defined specific training and practice requirements for their membership, produced guidelines for protection of the public and ethical practice statements; and created systems for dealing with internal and external complaints, including sanctions. As the largest counselling and psychotherapy organisation outside the United States, the BACP is regarded as speaking for the profession in the media and with government appointed bodies.

Evidence, but no accurate data exists to indicate that there are a large number of counsellors and psychotherapists who have decided not to take membership of the UKCP or BACP, preferring other smaller local organisations such as the Independent Practitioners Network (IPN), or rejecting affiliation with local or professional bodies altogether. Whilst no official data evidence exists, it is acknowledged by BACP and UKCP that there are practising counsellors and psychotherapists who are eligible for individual accreditation and or registration by BACP or UKCP who have chosen not to seek this status for a variety of political and personal reasons.

There are also an unquantifiable number of counsellors, who work in the voluntary sector and have received in-house training to meet the specific needs of the clients they help. This research focuses on training experiences within higher education settings.

As the largest and most vocal of the representative bodies for counselling is psychotherapy, the BACP will be used throughout this research as the main point of reference on training and professional practice matters, especially as it is the leading body which specifically refers to counsellors as well as psychotherapists. The BACP's 'Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy' will be taken as largely representing the concerns of those who have been interviewed, as all were members or worked for counselling establishments who are organisational members of BACP.

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the British Psychological Society (BPS) are the two largest organisations representing practising psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists. The BPS recruits almost all psychology graduates. Other sizeable organisations for counselling and psychotherapy include the British Association for Psychotherapy (BAP) and the British Confederation for Psychotherapy (BCP).

In March 2004 the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy had over 21500 members; of these were 4762 counsellors/psychotherapists individually by the BACP. In addition, the BACP has 4850 accredited supervisors, trainers and accredited training organisations. The United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) stated it had 6000 registered psychotherapy practitioners in March 2004. Although there is no official data available, a significant number of counsellors and psychotherapists are members of both the BACP and UKCP, as well as having accredited status from both professional bodies.

The British Association for Counselling Psychotherapy reported a total individual membership of 21500 (March 2004), of which 87% was female and 13% male. The organisational membership (1058) disguises a much larger constituency of active practitioners who subscribe to the BACP's 'Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy'. These might include students or trainees on courses and counsellors working within an organisation and voluntary counselling organisations. Other similar organisations, such as the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), the British Psychological Society, (BPS); the Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners, (AHPP) and the Independent Practitioners Network (IPN), have their own training requirements, codes of ethics, and accreditation regulations and procedures. Whilst there might be some dual membership of professional organisations, this is by no means common. The organisations do not necessarily share the same philosophy or standpoints on counselling and psychotherapy.

Interest in counselling and psychotherapy training

The popularity of counselling and psychotherapy extends to the growing interest amongst adults who wish to train to be counsellors or psychotherapists despite the precarious job and career prospects. There are few opportunities for full-time paid employment. Training for counselling and psychotherapy takes place within a variety of arenas including Higher Education and Further Education institutions as well as independent institutions. Lengths of training and training methods vary, as does the content and type of training offered. As Rice (2000a) notes, excluding higher education requirements in the counselling and psychotherapy arena 'you can train for five years or five days and still call yourself a therapist' (p4).

The label of 'wounded healer', a term from Jungian psychology, is often applied to counsellors who are said to be motivated to heal others in response to their own

experience of emotional pain. Many adults pursue counselling or psychotherapy training because of their own experience as clients or as a result of resolving a major life change, which encourages them to change their career path. It is not uncommon to begin this process through study on a personal development or access course or an interest in voluntary work. The interest in counselling and counselling skills also extends to those who wish to develop their abilities in this area for professional reasons apart from working as a therapist. The BACP courses directory mentions in excess of 900 counselling and psychotherapy courses available for study nation-wide, over eighty of which are provided by Higher Education institutions.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) course directory for the academic year 2000/ 2001 publicised over 88 courses with counselling as a major or sole component of an undergraduate degree, in some 18 higher education institutions. In 2001/2002 over 92 courses incorporating counselling or counselling skills were available for study (UCAS 2002). These figures for course and training availability are mirrored at post-graduate level, where provision is usually aimed at students who intend to pursue careers as counselling practitioners or psychotherapists.

Mander (1997), whilst welcoming some aspects of the interest in counselling, predicts a 'glut' of counsellors, and warns against the shift of focus from dealing with human suffering towards concerns for a counselling hierarchy and the self-interest and - absorption of counselling practitioners.

Invariably, training within this field is on a part-time basis. Part-time study also accommodates adult students who will usually need to pursue practice of their counselling through a placement, and have to access personal therapy as a course requirement. Counselling trainees do not qualify for government grant support. The estimated cost of counselling training is in the region of £8000-£10000. This may not include the cost of personal therapy and supervision although both are integral training requirements. Commentators have argued that the costs of training are prohibitive and tend to exclude potential students from working class backgrounds or those on low income (Kearney 1996; Gillon 2002). Financial constraints and caution mean that trainee therapists usually need to continue with their current occupations or have separate means of financial support whilst training.

Economic factors and the tendency to recruit mature students perpetuate the assumed profile of the majority of counsellors or psychotherapists as white, female, middle-

aged and middle-class. As there is no official monitoring of all counselling provision in England it is not possible to refute or to support this characterisation.

Trainee or student? Tutor, lecturer or facilitator?

Some counselling organisations and trainers that I have encountered during the period of this research avoid the use of the label student to describe a person in training, as the word implies a focus on academic study at the expense of real life training and practical experience.

The teaching and learning methods may not be noticeably different, particularly on courses that work with humanistic counselling and psychotherapy frameworks. For some training programmes, the labelling of the counsellor educator as a tutor, or lecturer, has specific connotations communicating something of how they will work with trainees. The contemporary counselling and psychotherapy movement, which has its origins in the alternative and radical approach to learning and dealing with relationships, seems reluctant to accept traditional labelling. As a movement, it has actively sought to distance itself from the more didactic teaching and learning approaches. The particular influence of Carl Rogers (1983) and others in favour of student-centred learning is apparent in counsellor education. Therefore, the titles of 'tutor' or 'lecturer' are seen as conferring power and status on individuals, whereas that of 'facilitator' suggests co-operative working and power sharing.

Many counselling courses involve 'staff' and 'students' in their design and assessment procedures of the course, particularly those that work with the Person-centred counselling model. This involves a significant amount of negotiation and facilitation amongst the learning group. It is not surprising therefore that counselling courses are often out on the margins within traditional higher educational environments with its prescribed curriculum or programme and a more didactic approach to teaching and learning.

The experiential methods and negotiated learning associated with counselling courses is often part of their appeal, especially amongst adult learners who may have previously had a more restrictive learning experience. Noyes' (1995) definition of experiential learning: 'Student centred learning from, through and by experience, plus the drawing out, reflecting on and evaluating this awareness' is particularly useful here as it hints at some of the more intangible aspects of counselling training and the interest in the abstract concepts of 'awareness'.

The preceding brief discussion may appear trivial but can be highly relevant in terms of some of the interpersonal dynamics that often exists in a counselling training programme where a substantial part of the learning agenda for the training group emanates from their experiences and their predicaments.

The terms 'trainee' and 'student' are used interchangeably here as in much of the current literature on counselling and psychotherapy training. The term 'trainer' will mostly be used because this research addresses the experience of practising counsellors and those who are in training and intending to work as counsellors.

Trainers and training

There has been extensive debate about the relevance and effectiveness of counselling training (Mair,1992; House,1997; House,2000). House and Mair refer to research conducted by Russell in 1981, and Hattie et al. in 1984 which indicated that a trained counsellor or psychotherapist is not necessarily more effective than an untrained helpful lay person.

Critics of the more formal academic type of counselling training argue forcefully that the increased training opportunities, and the interest shown by higher education institutions in providing this training, are a cynical exploitation of the potential financial rewards available from counselling trainees who desire the status of gaining a paper qualification.

Pollard (2001), in agreeing with Usher et al.(1997), suggests that

> 'To embark on counselling training is a consumer choice that can also be seen in the context of societal preoccupations with lifestyle and confessional practices as well as a means of acquiring a marketable qualification.'
>
> (p.15)

The Counselling Trainer

The BAC code of ethics and practice for trainers (1997) assumes that trainers are competent and practising counsellors. It also makes the following assumptions and assertions,

1. The trainer- trainee relationship is likened to that of the counsellor-client relationship. It is acknowledged that trainees will at times be vulnerable and in need of sensitive caring.
2. Trainers will regularly monitor their own functioning as trainers in supervision.
3. Trainers will respect the prior experience of the adult trainee and value their dignity and difference.
4. Trainers seek to ensure consistency between the teaching methods and the theoretical model of the course.

5. Trainers have a responsibility to the 'world of counselling'. This includes clients and other counselling practitioners.

Charleton (1996); Inskipp (1996); Johns (1998) and McLeod (2003) refer to learning theory in their work and the teaching of adults but this is not commonplace. It would seem that whilst the possession of an adult teaching qualification is regarded as an advantage for the counselling trainer, more credence is given to the trainer's ability to provide input that reflects and examines directly their work as an experienced counselling practitioner.

Connor (1994) echoes the views about counselling training held by a large number of writers in describing the 'good enough counselling trainer' as one who 'models: a way of being, the living reality of being professional and being human; the reflective practitioner and in possession of person-centred competence'.

Some trainers may have had additional teacher training and/or adult education training, but this is by no means a consistent pattern. Clarkson and Gilbert (1993) observe that many trainers naively enter into the training field with little preparation for the 'substantial shift in their frame of reference'.

However, as Dryden and Thorne (1993), Johns (1998), and Alyss Thomas (1998a) illustrate, counselling trainers rapidly learn that the additional role of trainer makes particular and specific demands on them in a way that a counselling relationship will not. Not the least of these is the role of assessing and evaluating the work of the counselling trainee, as well as dealing with controversial issues that arise in the training group between group members and with the trainer her or himself.

Inskipp (1996) refers to the roles and archetypes identified by Proctor that are expected by trainees and undertaken by the counselling trainer. The roles described are not dissimilar to those that might be expected from any educator practitioner. The archetypes, which include, 'Whore' 'Magician' 'Clown' 'Earth Mother' and 'Warrior' demonstrate the complexity of the counselling trainer's work. Thomas (1998a) asserts that '...being a counselling trainer can be bad for you' because of its demands and multi role expectancy from trainees requiring the trainer to work in the 'space between' being a counsellor and trainer (p18) is often not without its stresses for the trainer who is likely to be faced regularly with the prospect of making difficult decisions managing their own anxiety and the anxiety of the trainees.

Bennetts, (2003) observed that research by Truell indicated that trainees found their

trainers' use of this 'space' referred to by Thomas (1998a) bewildering as they were unsure what was required of them by the trainer.

The trainer's ability to consider the needs of the adult counselling trainee is assumed by virtue of their own training as counsellors and their enhanced relationship skills. Clarkson and Gilbert (1993) Connor (1994), highlight the tendency for the counselling trainer to reflect on their work as trainers and their trainees in terms of their preferred counselling orientation, proposing or applying psychological theory to explain trainee behaviour.

Further evidence of this idea can be seen in the way that Clarkson and Gilbert (1993); Connor (1994); Wheeler (1996); and Johns (1998), warn that counselling trainers are likely targets for their trainees' 'transferential material'. Thomas (1998b) elaborates on this by suggesting that the relative safety of the counselling training environment may encourage trainees to discharge previously held feelings and experiences marked by grief aiming these in a negative way at the trainer and their peers.

Such an interpretation has its problems in that the counselling trainer can choose to deflect criticism about curriculum content and training methods preferring to 'pathologise' trainees with psychological labels which define the trainee as difficult. This may be sought as an alternative to accepting that the trainer may have a real case to answer. Training supervision for the trainer might be of assistance here if the supervision is open to all possible explorations of the training dynamics.

Thomas (1998a) notes that facilitating the expression and exploration of difficult feelings within a training group requires the trainer to access and deal with her own feelings simultaneously. This goes some way to explain why working with issues of race and culture is so emotional, if the trainer has not explored their own feelings on this matter in some depth or their own training and personal therapy.

As Thomas (1998a) observes, there are few professional development or training of the trainer resources available for trainers. This situation has not improved during the research period. It may not be possible for BACP guidelines to be followed in rural areas with limited resources and a reliance on untrained staff (p23).

There are some developments within BACP to accredit counsellor trainers but this constitutes a small number. In December 2001 there were 117 accredited trainers. Clearly, accreditation has not proved to be essential nor attractive to trainers although

most would be in agreement with the ethical framework and practice by virtue of their membership which requires them to adhere to a prescribed ethical framework. More advances have been made in the non-statutory agencies such as Relate, Samaritans and Pastoral Counselling organisations. The standardised curriculum and training packages of these organisations makes specific demands on their trainers in terms of content, delivery and measurement of outcomes.

Thorne and Dryden (1993); Clarkson and Gilbert (1993);Aveline (1996); Johns (1998), and others, discuss at length the challenge for trainers to model the core theoretical model counselling approach as well as working with the complexity of feelings that arise integrating understanding of counselling theory through experiential work and activities. Rarely do they expound on the trainer's own awareness of their racial identity and how this might relate issues and 'race' and culture within their practice as trainers and counsellors.

There are brief mentions of the need to consider the contexts of poverty, disability, equality gender and 'race' in the training of counsellors and that these and other issues are tackled as special issues in a growing number of counselling texts. There are a number of cookbook type texts offering a range of simulations and exercises for counselling courses covering specific minority client issues. Examples of these are evident in the texts produced by Tolan and Lendrum (1995), and Dainow and Bailey (1988). Apart from a few exceptions such as Lago and Thompson (1996), Tuckwell (2002), and Lawrence (2003) there is also a distinct lack of discussion about how these issues might be addressed in training in British counselling texts. This is perplexing in light of the assertion made by Connor (1994) and other writers in a similar vein who assert that:

> '... an effective counsellor trainer is one who produces knowledgeable, competent, confident, resourceful, sensitive, flexible and caring counsellors able to work in whatever counselling setting and with whatever counselling clients and issues are appropriate.'
> (p.21)

The temptation for the trainer, to train counsellors in their own image is real given their remit and responsibilities. This can occur particularly when trainers have sole responsibility for devising the training programme and assessing trainees with little external scrutiny.

Clarkson and Nippoda (1998) quote the work of Farrell who noticed that participants in a programme are declared 'cured' or 'trained' when they have adopted the WOT (way of talking) of the trainer or counselling psychologist, (p97). The counselling training experience changes the person significantly. The testimony of trainees from their own self assessments and the evaluations of their peers and partners provides supportive evidence of this.

Johns (1998) describes the trainer as a catalyst for change. Perhaps one way of assisting that change would be to ensure that training teams are culturally and racially different. Lago and Thompson (1996), and Charleton (1996) observe that learning opportunities are limited for those who are in the minority in a training group and that when a particular group is represented in a staff team the numbers of students from that group rise accordingly.

The trainer's responsibility to the 'world of counselling' involves making assessments at the initial selection process and subsequently on the competence of the counselling trainee. A question commonly used by trainers to assess the competence of trainees is 'Would I refer my clients to this person?' If the answer to this and other questions relating to trainee competence is no then the trainer has an ethical responsibility to encourage the trainee to end their training. Such a question is open to the bias of the trainer and their value system.

This responsibility invests the counselling trainer with a significant amount of power and influence. The Black trainee, aware of this power may elect to conform to the perceived image and requirements of the counselling trainer in order to be considered fit to practice.

Lago and Thompson (1996) note that,

> '...many white people are quite unable to cope with radical black perspectives and black people's pain and anger specifically in relation to racism.'
> (p.20)

The research evidence collected indicates that some respondents concealed their views and doubts about counselling theory and criticism of their training in order to 'survive' their courses. The accounts of two Black counsellors Cleminson (1997/98) and Virdee (2003), illustrates how they 'survived' their training through their tenacity and decision to suppress their views until they achieved their desired qualifications. The ability to repress parts of the self for survival is a theme repeated throughout the

research findings discussed in chapter five. Cleminson (1997) and Uwahemu (2004) contend that this is the learned behaviour which has it origins in of surviving oppression.

The trainer addressing issues of 'race' and culture

Moodley (2000b) outlines the challenge thus:

> 'As trainers of counsellors and psychotherapists we must seek to understand fully how the dynamics of "race", culture and ethnicity can be used/misused/abused, confused in training counsellors.'
>
> (p.222)

Banks (1992) suggests that counsellors (he refers to white counsellors), need time and assistance to cope with their own feelings of defensiveness, and sense of loss of innocence about their own racist attitudes. This may lead them to become emotionally distant, avoiding the client's experience of racism as a way of coping with their own distress, (1999). He argues that the goal of the counselling trainer is ultimately to help the trainee counsellor to deal with their feelings of 'loss', 'pain', shame and 'confusion' working towards the ultimate goal of improving the 'service delivery to black clients'. The assumption here is that the counselling trainer has resolved their own defensiveness, sense of loss and racist attitudes. The research findings indicate that this is often not the case.

The Black counsellors interviewed, complained that attempts at resolving conflicting feelings about 'race', or racism, amongst white peer trainees and trainers was frequently done at their expense and to their detriment as trainees counsellors. A reason for this might be because the current generation of trainers were trained before accepted recognition of the importance of inclusion of issues of 'race' and culture in counsellor training.

Mckenzie-Mavinga (2003) observed that 'black issues are rarely addressed in a normative routine way', because it is seen as a contentious issue. McKenzie-Mavinga proposes that counselling training utilises a historical perspective as a more productive way of exploring black issues and the impact of racism and oppression, thus encouraging dialogue and debate in the learning group rather than high levels of emotional angst or resistance. McCarthy (2003) makes a similar point with reference to teacher training in the United States.

She states that as well as acknowledging the relevance of intra minority conflicts and the impact of shadeism

> '...We have to look at the varied and variable patterns in which different social groups are historically incorporated into the institutional life of systems and structures such as those associated with education.'
>
> (p.132)

Roach (1999) goes further citing the profile of the multiculturally competent trainer, prepared by Ponterotto (1998) as a useful if idealised guide for what is needed by trainees (p168). The qualities of the multiculturally skilled counsellor, as described by Lago and Thompson (1996) also show the need for a significant shift in the thinking of theorists and the practice of trainers and training organisations.

Gender and ethnicity issues within counselling practice and theoretical writing

Sayers (1999) observed that women outnumbered men as clients (a ratio of over 2:1) and as therapists in the NHS clinic that she worked in. In another investigation, Sayers found that within the British Confederation of Psychotherapists (BCP), women outnumber men as therapists specialising in work with adults, a situation replicated in the membership of the British Association of Psychotherapists. However, Sayers (1999) notes that in the British Psycho-Analytical Society (BPAS), seen as 'the most powerful grouping within the BCP, men outnumber women.

A brief survey of the list of publications in the field of writing about counselling and psychotherapy theory in two major publishers' lists in Britain shows that it is dominated by men.

With a few notable exceptions, Dryden and Thorne (1993), Dryden and Feltham (1994) Mearns (1997), it would seem from the evidence available that in Britain, white women writers are producing the bulk of the literature specifically dealing with counselling training and training issues.

To some extent this is logical as white women probably constitute the majority of counsellor trainers in Britain (Gillon 2002). As Catherine Hall (2001) asserts white women carry 'the legacy' of responsibility for the making of the modern world in a different ways to men, but 'carrying it none the less.' If this notion of responsibility forms part of the world view of female counsellors and trainers in the Britain then it has a consequent effect on their relationships with their black clients, peers and trainees. Evidence of writing by Black counselling trainers on training exemplified by the work of d'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989); Dupont-Joshua (1996); Grant (1999);

Mckenzie- Mavinga, (2004); Taylor-Muhammad (2001); Thompson (1996) (with Lago); is scant and so far appears to focus mainly on the cultural and racial dimension of the counselling or supervisory relationship rather than on training issues in general. One could speculate that the gender and ethnicity of the aforementioned writers has determined their focus of interest or specialism. Those critical of current developments in counselling training tend to agree with the protest made by House (1997):

> 'The anxiety-driven impulse to measure, assess, control and mechanise a process that is quintessentially human, intersubjective, mysterious and quite possibly in principle beyond the ambit of rationalist scientific understanding is not only inappropriate, but actually violating of the essence of the therapeutic healing process.'
>
> (p.105)

The drive towards professionalisation and the acquisition of paper qualifications for counselling as opposed to a focus on the vocational aspects of counselling training is one of the central areas of contention and disagreement. This is in part linked to increasing pressure from the British government for counselling and psychotherapy to produce a national register of its practitioners, ostensibly for the safety of the public. If a register is to exist, then criteria for registration will need to include the base line training and qualifications of those listed as well as a clear definition of what a counsellor or psychotherapist is and does.

In 1988, the BAC (British Association for Counselling, now BACP) published recommendations that listed the broad themes and provisions that should be included in a training course. (Appendix 2) These themes incorporated knowledge and understanding of the sensitive and ethical use of counselling and counselling skills and an appreciation of an 'equal opportunities perspective'. There were also guidelines about minimum course length (450 hours), the ratio of theoretical input to skills practice, and the assessment of personal development and skills development. These provisions and recommendations formed part of the requirements for formal course accreditation by the BACP. They were also a useful preliminary checklist for those seeking individual counsellor accreditation. In addition, accredited courses 'should provide opportunities to explore multicultural counselling competencies and standards and implications for the core theoretical model'. The BACP rationale for the concentration on one (core) theoretical model in a counselling training

programme is aimed at consistency and coherence of experience and depth of understanding for the counselling trainee.

Since 1992, BACP delegates and other members of the lead body for Advice and Guidance Counselling and Psychotherapy have agreed competency levels for the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in counselling and the use of counselling skills. It would seem that interest in NVQ is limited and as yet, not quantifiable as many organisations continue to rely on their own internal methods to train and assess the competence of counselling trainees.

To date, a national agreement has been not reached about the essential content of training programmes although there have been some developments in this relatively new field. For example, the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) and Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) are national bodies who have developed and examine counselling courses aimed at post secondary school Advanced level students.

The BACP (2002) course accreditation criteria expect 'courses to subscribe to an equal opportunities policy consistent with that of BACP in respect of all aspects of the course'. BACP anticipates that students admitted to accredited courses should show evidence of their 'awareness of prejudice and oppression' (p11) in the selection process. Study on a BACP accredited course should enable students to describe 'the social system in which we live and the ways these affect client development' (p14). This represents a move away from Wheeler's (1996) earlier survey results based on the responses of forty trainers. The results revealed that amongst a list of seventeen entry selection criteria for trainees only one trainer regarded evidence of the applicant trainees' awareness of minority issues as important.

This research highlights the need for more of a focus on the person of the 'trainer' and the qualities needed in the trainer to facilitate the development of the counselling trainees, particularly in the area of addressing relating to ethnicity, culture and cultural difference on a counselling course. The research findings from this work shows that the inability of tutors to deal with these issues led to a great deal of dissatisfaction for the Black trainees concerned.

Just as there is no agreed core curriculum for counselling training, it is also important to note that in general, counselling trainers are not trained to teach or facilitate on counselling courses. Teachers and trainers in education are usually trained to fulfil their function and their effectiveness is monitored whilst learning their craft. This is

not the case within counselling and psychotherapy trainings. Most counselling trainers become trainers by default or as a result of peer recognition as excellent practitioners or clinical supervisors. Some counselling trainers have a relevant educative background as ex- school teachers, lecturers or trainers in other fields prior to working as practising counsellors, but this is not always the case. To some extent it is assumed that their skills and experiences as counsellors or group facilitators will carry them through. An extension of this is that the nature and philosophy of counselling and counselling practice will provide the appropriate environment and learning experience for trainees. Some of this belief may come from Carl Rogers' ideas about student-centred learning and training groups creating their own learning contracts and agenda.

The aspect of 'trust' in the expertise of the group and the importance placed on student-centred learning could lead to avoidance and denial of cultural and ethnic differences as an important dimension to explore whether or not they have a member from a different culture present. This situation highlights the need for the trainer or facilitator to be sufficiently perceptive and competent to be able to address issues of race and culture with a training group who may be reluctant or resistant to doing so. Evidence of the subtlety and embedded nature of bias that can be denied or go unrecognised in trainees is given in research conducted by Pearce (1994).

From her research Pearce (1994) found that even with limited information about client ethnicity, white trainee counsellors and nurses studying counselling as a specialism were making 'biased responses' on the basis of the perceived cultural differences between clients who were white, Asian, Jewish or West Indian. Pearce (1994) noted that research participants seemed to be unaware of their own basic cultural biases which may have been influenced by Western counselling theoretical perspectives such as Rogerian theory perhaps, about the self and individualism.

Course delivery issues

The drive towards the regulation and registration of counsellors and psychotherapists whilst problematic in some areas highlights some of the current anomalies that exist within the area of training and the designation of qualifications awarded.

To some extent, the increased involvement of higher education in counselling training has led to some attempt at standardisation and parity of training levels and experience. The same cannot be said in the private sector where a diploma course could be advertised by one institution as a two year part-time course and another as a

three or four year part-time course with no real explanation as to why they differ. This situation presents potential counselling trainees with significant difficulties in making an informed choice about courses.

Counsellor accreditation

Individual accreditation (BACP) is regarded by most employers as a basic minimum requirement. To apply for individual accreditation as a counsellor from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy a counsellor applicant must have completed a minimum of 450 hours of training comprising 200 hours of skills training and 250 hours of theory. In addition to this, the applicant needs to have completed a minimum of 450 hours of supervised counselling practice and accessed a minimum of 40 hours personal therapy. Individual counsellor applicants can also apply for accreditation through two other routes, which take into account their length and experience of practice as counsellors and or a portfolio of training, which demonstrates logical development and internal consistency of approach.

Course content

Whilst there is some commonality in the basic components of a counselling training course: knowledge of theory and research, assessment of: skills practice, professional development, supervision and personal development, evaluation of the way that these aspects are delivered is variable and linked to a particular model of counselling or orientation. (Dryden and Thorne 1993; Charleton, 1996; Mearns 1997)

Counselling trainees are expected to gain experience through a counselling placement during their training and, usually, to have access to personal therapy throughout the training period or for a specified number of sessions. Trainees are required to have monthly 'clinical' supervision of their counselling practice. The counselling organisations in Britain are unique in their insistence that all counsellors should be in supervision throughout their training and professional lives. These requirements involve additional costs, which have to be borne by the trainee.

Implicit in further discussions about the dyadic relationships between counsellor and client is the inclusion of the supervisory relationship which can add to the richness and complexity of the counselling relationship in terms of the multiplicity of identities that the agents within the relationship claim ownership of. For example, black counsellor, white client, white supervisor, or black counsellor, black client white supervisor. Although clients do not have direct contact with their counsellor's clinical supervisor their counsellor will be examining their relationship with the

client and the client's issues in another relationship in with its own particular dynamic of difference. Even where client, counsellor and supervisor are ostensibly ethnically matched, the interplay between counsellor and supervisor is likely to have an impact on the counselling relationship.

Writers on counselling training describe some of the activities, which might take place on a course or produce books suggesting activities and simulations; few have been specific about the content of a whole course for a practising counsellor or state a firm commitment to a prescribed knowledge base. For instance, in their description of their course's content counselling course leaders Moore and Stewart (2001) provide outlines within which were generalised comments about how theory is integrated and translated into practice, the importance of learning in a group, and the need to respect and address the feelings of others. There was also a clear indication of the intensity of emotions experienced by trainees and that the work done in personal therapy and in a personal development group presented additional unpredictable challenges for individual trainees.

Despite the prescribed course content descriptions produced by national organisations like Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) and Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) it is difficult to get definitive statements about course content from course leaders as the intriguing, lyrical but vague commentary on training course content from Alred (1999) indicates:

> 'There is no course structure that could map neatly onto the trainee's experience. There can only be an approximation to it that contains hopefully with safety, respect and challenge - the messiness, frustrations, excitements, confusions, thunderclaps, deluges, persistent breezes and welcome sunshine that a learning trainee engenders.'
> (p 256)

Broadly, most three year part-time diploma courses will cover the following topics and themes in varying depths and allocations of time to each topic: counselling theory study of the main theoretical approach of the course; comparative counselling theory; counselling practice skills; interpersonal relations; group relations and group dynamics; ethics and ethical dilemmas; issues of power and oppression and the realities for oppressed groups in society; issues of difference and diversity; transition, loss and bereavement; human development theory; aspects of spirituality; sexuality and sexual orientation; professional practice and development issues; use of

counselling supervision; psychopathology and diagnosis of mental ill health; working with specific client groups or issues e.g. eating disorders, incest survivors and working within organisations or as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

Generally, courses aim for breadth as well as depth. In courses that feature experiential learning methods, tutors may also encourage course participants to contribute to the learning within the group from their own areas of 'expertise' and knowledge. It is on this basis that some black students may be identified as 'experts' and asked to contribute to the learning of the group.

Buchanan and Hughes, (2000) document the experiences of person-centred counselling trainees providing supportive evidence for what is considered to be the general case in counselling training. Counsellor educators and trainees agree that counselling training by its nature is often a life-changing process. Amongst others, the words 'struggle' 'pain' 'discovery' 'vulnerability', 'joy' 'fear', are frequently used when counsellors are asked to reflect on their training. The emphasis on active learning, and learning through discussion and experiential process brings with it the possibilities of emotionally charged atmospheres and experiences. Bennetts (2003) shares these observations and states that unlike other types of adult learning that may focus on one form of learning counsellor training involves the two forms of adult learning: developmental, concerned with career, and transformational, concerned with changes in 'thinking, feeling, acting relating and being.'(p306)

In their separate studies of counselling trainees' experiences Bennetts (2003); Marshall and Andersen (1995) and Marshall (2000) note the high levels of emotional competence required of the counselling trainee. In particular, Marshall (2000) identified the developmental stages of counsellor trainees, moving from shattering experiences and losing old sense of self through to a new sense of self and a counsellor identity.

Self-confrontation and examination of individual relationships with others is rarely a smooth and uneventful journey. The term 'journey' is an apt and often used metaphor in counselling training and practice. Counsellors often talk of their training and subsequent practice as being part of a journey. This metaphor is supported in counselling literature by the work of Wilkins (1997); Feltham (1999); Connor 1994 and many others.

Wilkins (1997) refers to the training process as a journey of discovery…'the uncovering of existing attitudes and skills'. On that journey counselling trainees

examine past and present relationships and experiences in the light of their exposure to counselling theory. In the longer term, counsellors have made a commitment to continuing the journey of self-development (Marshall and Andersen (1995)

The needs of the counselling trainee

The needs of counselling trainees in general and Black counselling trainees in particular are referred to throughout this thesis. These identified needs are contrasted with the identified competency requirements of counselling trainers necessary for effective counselling training.

In his critique of counselling, Persaud (1996) cites Templer's (1971) identification of eight personality types motivated towards the counselling profession, none of which appear to be positive or suggestive of stability. Individuals who are uncertain about their own identity, socially inhibited or withdrawn, dependent or defensive about dependency, rigidly intellectualistic, sadistic, rigidly defensive against hostility, masochistic are purported to inhabit the counselling profession (p 199)

Wheeler (1996) cites research conducted by White and Franzoni, which found that trainee counsellors had higher levels of psychological disturbance than recorded in the general population. It is difficult to ignore or deny completely this characterisation of counsellors as many, (researcher included) would own some these descriptors as part or parts of themselves.

Counselling trainees are encouraged to identify and examine their 'weak spots' and to work on them in personal therapy, training and supervision likewise qualified practising counsellors who remain within the framework of personal therapy, continuous professional development training and supervision throughout their working lives. As well as affirming the more positive aspects of themselves, counsellors are exhorted to monitor their self awareness and to own and re-visit aspects of themselves that are not necessarily helpful to them or their clients as described above.

The focus on group learning and group activity through trainer facilitation and discussion is a key element of counselling training. It is usual for counselling trainees to be assessed on their group relations, contributions and counselling skills, particularly on courses with a Person-centred orientation within a small or large group context.

Self-exploration might be in part a private and individual through access to personal therapy. However, trainees are encouraged to struggle with and celebrate these

insights aloud and in the presence of training group in order to receive additional insight and feedback from peers and tutors. A further requirement is for counselling trainees to become familiar and comfortable with 'public' assessments from tutors and peers as well as 'public' challenges about their contributions, opinions or apparent behaviour.

Counselling theorists seem to agree that self-exploration, is one of, the key elements of counselling training programmes. Even those against the proliferation of formal and more academic training programmes accept that the essential tool the counsellor has to offer in the counselling relationship is the counsellor as her or himself, (Mair, 1992; Aveline, 1996; Wheeler, 1996; House, 1997; Johns 1998).

Thorne and Dryden 1993 state that effective training:

> '... must involve a high degree of self-exploration on the part of trainees with the aim of increasing their self-awareness and self knowledge...an unaware counsellor leading an unexamined life is likely to be a liability rather than an asset.'
>
> (p.3& 4)

House, (1997) Aveline (1996), Wheeler (1996) and others go further suggesting that the transaction between counsellor and client is located less in the counsellor's self-awareness and more in the client's ability to extract from the counsellor and the counselling relationship learning and supportive elements that will bring about change and self-efficacy. Coate and Murdin (2001) conclude that it is the development of the counsellor's ability to be empathic in a counselling relationship and continuously monitor their own self-awareness that is the key foci of a training course.

Addressing 'race' and culture in counselling training

Apart from a few exceptions (such as Banks, 1999; Tuckwell, 2002) the literature reviewed in the United Kingdom suggests that the counsellor's self-awareness and understanding about their own identity in relation to 'race' and culture is not always seen as important aspect of counselling training worthy of exploration.

North American theorists Jones, (1987) and Ridley (1995), refer to the development of self-awareness in relation to issues of 'race' and culture directly whilst Dryden and Thorne (1993), and Merry (1999) discuss counselling trainee self-awareness development in more general terms. The findings of this research suggest that it is the way that counselling trainees are encouraged to examine their lives as part of their training 'journey', particularly in relation to their exploration of 'race' and

cultural issues that can be problematic, especially if group discussion is the only method by which this is achieved. Lawrence (2003), an experienced Black trainer advocates the use of a range of methods to explore self-awareness and personal development in relation to issues of 'race' and culture.

Lowenstein (1987) reported on the lack of research and apparent disinterest in cross-cultural counselling in Britain. From his research he discovered there was a belief amongst counsellors that minority ethnic clients would [should?] absorb the existing norms of British society therefore there was no need for counsellors to be concerned with cultural issues.

There has been some development since the early 1980s. Contemporary writers on counselling theory, practice and training in Britain admit to the paucity of material and reflection that exists. This acknowledgement is often as a one sentence or paragraph apology in their text. (Connor, 1994; Charleton 1996; Johns, 1998). Recently, a number of specialised texts which focus on cultural issues have been published in Britain. (Lago and Thompson 1996; Palmer and Laungani 1999; Palmer, 2002; Tuckwell 2002) A revised introductory text by McLeod (2003) is one of a small number of attempts to address issues of 'race' and culture in a general publication on counselling thereby signalling a move away from marginalisation of such issues into special texts.

d'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989); Lago and Thompson (1996); Ridley (1995), Palmer and Laungani (1999); and Moodley (2000a, b,) highlight the dominance of Eurocentric models within counsellor education and the perpetuation of myths and stereotypes through the exclusive and often uncritical study of these models in training programmes. The continued belief that black clients are unable to reflect on their inner world in therapy or the simplistic view that black clients are victims of racism and do not have any other equally pressing concerns that have an effect on their mental health are examples of the assumptions made d'Ardenne and Mahtani (1989) describe how the combination of Eurocentric training and the assumed preconceptions of the counsellor may inhibit or deter the minority ethnic client from trusting the counsellor in the following way:

> 'Clients from different cultures who have suffered prejudice and lack of economic and educational

> opportunities find the world to be an untrustworthy place. In the therapeutic relationship, counsellors from the majority culture therefore have to attain trustworthiness in the eyes of their clients to counteract this effect.'
>
> (p.84)

Merry and Lusty (1999) confidently declare that 'all good training courses include the examination of racist and sexist attitudes and help trainee counsellors to overcome them (p105). The authors did not elaborate on how this is achieved or how they might evaluate the efficacy of this 'examination' in terms of counsellor performance and competence.

Merry and Lusty (1999) hint at the resistance to change and conservatism that might exist amongst trainers and in the training establishment. They worry that in taking account of the presumed preferences of people from different cultural groups the counsellor is in danger of 'seriously compromising the theoretical basis of their work'. This is an indicator of the hegemonic nature of current counselling and psychotherapy theoretical frameworks with its western, Eurocentric bias is likely to be unwilling to welcome new ideas and frameworks from other sources. There is a suggestion here that counselling and psychotherapy practice perpetuates the status quo through the dominant philosophy of individualism rather than collectivism and is, therefore, oppressive, (Carter, 1995; Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan 1997).

Traditional cultural values

As the Joseph Rowntree (2001) and other reports show, some black clients have expressed their dissatisfaction with counselling and psychotherapy because it does not reflect their cultural values. Other black clients who want to challenge such values are attracted to talking therapies precisely for that reason. Working with a white or 'Other' counsellor may provide them with a space to explore conflicting values without judgement.

The review of available literature and my attendance at conferences with a focus on the specialist needs of minority ethnic clients emphasise the importance for a counsellor to gain an understanding and pay attention to the traditional cultural values of clients in building an effective therapeutic alliance, adapting their ways of working where necessary. This might include working in partnership with traditional healers or using some of their methods.

Research undertaken by Tseki (1999) at Basotho University illustrates this point. She shows how western counselling and psychotherapy methods were used in conjunction with traditional healing in order to help student clients. In her view, the Basotho 'want someone to help them assert and reinforce their traditional value system' this involves adapting western methods whilst taking care to match the needs, experiences and expectations of clients.

At a conference on working with Muslim clients (North Kirklees MIND 2003) the consistent reason given for low take-up of counselling services and the high drop-out rate of clients was the clients' perceptions of counsellors' lack of understanding of the way in which Islam affects 'every single aspect of that person's life'. Other dominating factors mentioned were: language barriers, lack of Asian and Muslim counsellors visible within services, and fear of psychiatric labelling.

Three research participants, interviewed for this work, referred to the ways in which they made use of their knowledge of how clients' describe their mental distress through bodily (somatic) images or ailments. Their clients did not use the psychological terminology to describe their distress within their vernacular. As Shoaib and Peel's (2003) work shows, this way of communicating mental distress is not restricted to black clients alone but applies across the board in a range of cultures.

The implication from much of the literature examined is that addressing issues of 'race' and culture is a 'risky' venture rather than a positive enterprise. The legacy of the poor reputation of 'race' awareness courses in the mid to late 1970s lingers, as do the memories of white participants who recall the intense feelings evoked especially those of guilt and anger and blame. This anxiety associated with explorations of 'race' is noted by Lago and Thompson (1996) who write that,

> 'Training in this arena has the potential to go to the core of one's cultural racial identity and present demanding questions and disturbing scenarios.'
>
> (p.134)

Some of the research evidence collected and my experience of training courses as participant and course leader support the description of feelings referred to above. Thomas (1992) sympathises with the inherent difficulties in exploring these issues and is also uncompromising in his views, which applies to white and black practitioners.

> 'It is extremely difficult for any form of racism, accrued from a lifetime of socialisation, to be brought to personal awareness, yet this is indeed what needs to take place so that our practice [as psychotherapists or counsellors] is not dominated by what can be termed 'societal racism'...personal attitudes and assumptions need to be re-worked and re-examined.'
>
> (1992, p.133)

Fairhurst and Merry (1999) agree that working on issues of culture can be risky and requires respectful, empathic and careful facilitation by trainers. They provide evidence of the benefits of tackling such issues in a residential setting as it allows time for issues to be resolved. They report that in this 'safe' learning environment, cultural issues are 'woven into the fabric of the programme rather than made into special cases. In this setting trainees can confront their prejudices and be challenged within group community meetings. The authors did not substantiate this success with statements from black course participants in their work. Similarly, Alred (1999) quotes the training experience of a black trainee who came to value group learning in spite of experiencing 'racial prejudice'. Alred does not detail how the trainee or trainees who were being prejudicial resolved or changed their ideas.

Smith and Tudor (2003) observe that despite a general perception that counselling and psychotherapy is at the leading edge of radicalism, the 'traditional training for counsellors and psychotherapists fails to embrace the needs of oppressed and marginalized groups' (p135). Highly critical of the prominence of experiential training which stigmatises minorities as victims or individuals to be pitied, Smith and Tudor (2003), give examples of role plays and simulations which are not only offensive and limiting but also add to 'the tragedy model' of disability. Such well intentioned but narrow-focussed methods are also employed in training simulations and role plays attempting to address 'race' and culture. Smith and Tudor (2003) recommend that counselling training should address oppression and its manifestations as a whole, examining the political and personal effects of oppression on us all.

On the whole, writers of the current literature on training fail to make the transition of integrating or embedding notions of (multi) cultural competence in their texts or to expound on practical applications of their ideas. Ridley (1995) a North American theorist, argues forcefully that in some cases, the traditional training undertaken by counselling trainees makes them a 'liability' to their clients. Traditional training

methods and content encourages counsellors to convey to their clients that they are responsible for many of their negative experiences denying the impact of societal forces and racism as part of the equation. Ridley (1995) quotes the work of Sue and Sue (1990) which shows that traditional training does not equip counsellors with the skills or competence to be effective with minority ethnic clients.

Other training models

Hall and Moodley (2001), proposed the use of an African centred counselling model for working with black and white clients. The seven principles within Nguzo Saba, a model initially developed by Karenga encompasses the principles of *Umoja* (unity in the family and community), *Kujichagalia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective and individual responsibility in the community), *Ujaama* (co-operative economics and business enterprise), *Nia* (purpose community building), *Kuumba* (creativity for personal and community edification), *Imani* (faith in our people and of struggle). This model offers a way of supporting an individual within the community whilst encouraging attention to all relationships the client might have. The idea of such a model being of use to black and white clients in Britain requires a shift in thinking and a challenge to current counselling training principles and values, because there is less of a focus on the individual responsibility and concerns of the client. It is likely that the model offers a view of the world that some black and white people might share.

Carter (1995) working in the United States, advocates a new model of training which adopts a 'Pan-National' approach. This training includes didactic and experiential work covering cross-cultural perspectives in psychotherapy and a study of racism and mental health. Trainees would be encouraged to 'emancipate' themselves from Eurocentric psychology (p260) and reject counselling approaches that denied the oppressive power dynamics existing in European psychology that is anti-African, Asian and Indian.

Sue, Akutsu, Higashi et al (1987) from the United States recommends didactic teaching about other cultures as well as gaining practical experience of working with clients from other cultures. They also warn against stereotyping of clients based on their limited and generalised knowledge of other cultures. This method of counselling training appears to be common in United States but has not been adopted in Britain.

Merry and Lusty(1999) were dubious of such an approach and emphasise that it is unrealistic and not necessary to be knowledgeable about numerous groups and cultures, suggesting that counsellors 'confront the nature of their own prejudice by firstly examining their own 'cultural norms and expectations'. This idea is gathering more support and prominence in recent training literature.

Murdin (2001), comments on the lack of ethnic diversity amongst teaching staff and students on counselling training courses whilst acknowledging the value of addressing cultural issues. Murdin (2001) identified the perceived obstacles to the inclusion of such issues within a training programme highlighting the extra and complex demands trainers and trainees would face the potential lengthening of training programmes and the extra expense it would incur. Worse still, that this would present even greater barriers for minority ethnic students, recent immigrants and refugees! If such spurious and skewed reasoning is symptomatic of the lack of progress witnessed thus far it does not bode well for future development of training in this area.

There still seems to be a pervasive belief in the 'one size fits all' approach to counselling training and delivery. This assumption holds that current counselling models and approaches referred to in training are appropriate for use with all clients regardless of their cultural background or experience. There is a limited challenge to acceptance of the inappropriateness of this notion. On some courses counselling trainees will receive a one-off input on issues of 'race' and culture from a visiting tutor. Or, some provision is made through a single module or unit. The research interviewees suggested that the rare excursions of exploration into these issues were often disappointing and sometimes did more harm than good. This view is supported by Lawrence (2003), who favours the integrated approach to raising awareness about racial and cultural issues in counselling such an approach means that the issues are addressed regularly and are embedded in the curriculum.

The Multicultural approach

North American theorists such as Sue and Sue (1990), Pedersen (1995), Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan (1997), describe the multicultural counselling approach as the significant fourth force in the practice and theoretical development of counselling. This approach has been evolving in the United States since the early 1960s gaining prominence as the dominant approach since the 1980s but is not without its detractors.

The multicultural approach challenges the theoretical assumptions of the three major counselling schools or forces (psychodynamic, humanistic and cognitive-behavioural) about the best way to work with clients, encouraging counselling practitioners to adapt their practice and or dispense with their firmly held theoretical understanding in favour of an approach which encourages the practitioner to take into account the complexity of cultural differences and contexts in the cross-cultural therapeutic encounter of counsellor and client. The focus is similar to the existential approach which places emphasis on the co-operative alliance between the client and counsellor examining the way in which the socio-political circumstances of the client contributes to their feelings of distress.

For the counsellor using the multicultural approach it is important to consider the impact of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other societal structures capable of oppressing the individual in conjunction with their theoretical understanding of the most effective form of therapy (Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan 1997). An exploration with the client of their world-view, cultural intricacies of their family bonds, spiritual beliefs and norms, is an essential part of this model.

Despite the apparent shift in emphasis towards the multicultural counselling approach in the United States, Ivey, Ivey and Simek-Morgan (1997), in quoting the review of literature conducted in 1995 by Leong, Wagner and Piroshaw Tata, shows that little progress had been made in the improvement of effectiveness of psychotherapeutic services for ethnic minorities since Sue's survey in 1988 as the recommendations for improvements to services are similar. This finding is not dissimilar to Sheets' (2003) discovery of the relative ineffectiveness of race awareness training amongst teachers and students.

Patterson (1996; 2004) a prominent counselling and psychotherapy theorist, has been steadfast in his criticism of the move towards training counsellors in United States and presumably, elsewhere in the world to develop multicultural competencies, by focusing on specific techniques and skills. Given the spread of globalisation, and 'increasing homogeneity' Patterson (1996) asserts that more attention should be given to what binds rather than divides human beings and that there is too much focus on cultural diversity and difference. He argues for the 'universality' of counselling training and practice whereby counsellors develop skills that will enable them to work effectively with all clients. This universal system, Patterson (1996) believes is encapsulated in the Person-centred approach as theorised by Rogers(1957) and others

with the additional element of 'structuring' which can be roughly translated as teaching the 'client' about the therapeutic process works.

Patterson's (1996) criticism of this mechanistic approach to therapy where working with cultural difference could be reduced to the counsellor learning a series of skills and techniques supposedly relevant and useful to working with minority ethnic clients could be valid. However, what is missing is Patterson's acknowledgement of the impact of racism and the implications this has for the client and counsellor relationship. His simple insistence that the difference amongst clients is either accidental ('the accident of place of birth') or essential (human) is rather naïve and in many ways as dangerous as the multicultural competencies he is so critical of.

The position of counselling training in the Britain

D'Andrea and Daniels (1991), (See Ridley 1995) propose a 2 level 4 stage model that traces the typical stages of counselling courses training development in the way that issues relating to 'race' and culture are addressed.

Inferences drawn from the brief survey conducted of courses conducted suggests that courses in Britain may be at stage 2, level 1 of the Cultural Encapsulation stage. That is, an acceptance of the importance of addressing cultural issues to a minimal degree. At best, there is an inclusion of a number of programmes and courses that acknowledge the importance of 'multicultural issues' (level 2, stage 1)

If this assessment of the position of counselling training within the Britain is accurate then it is not probable that the needs of the black trainee can be adequately addressed, nor is it likely that the black client can assume that they will experience appropriate and sensitive help.

The signs are that the inclusion of training on issues of 'race' and culture is still seen as and an added extra rather than an approach that is an integral and necessary part of the initial training of a counsellor. This concept is familiar to many trained counsellors who choose to develop their understanding of cultural issues during or after their initial training through short continuing professional development courses as an added extra.

Evidence suggests that this 'extra' may not be entirely optional for BACP members. Moodley (2000(b)) notes that those seeking individual BACP counsellor accreditation are now required to 'supply evidence' that they have addressed issues of difference and equality in their practice' and further, that clients have the right to expect that these issues have been addressed in training'(p 223).

In an introductory text book for trainee counsellors, John McLeod (2003), a British counselling theorist, describes the dimensions of the individual culture which a counsellor needs to understand and take account of when working with a client. Referring to the work of Dyche and Zayas and Ridley and Lingle, McLeod concludes that counsellors should aim 'to adopt an attitude of cultural naivete and respectful curiosity 'or cultural empathy when working with clients. This involves being willing to talk openly about cultural issues and differences and making use of a range of appropriate therapeutic techniques and ideas which do not necessarily arise from one core theoretical model or approach. This requires the counsellor to make judicious and competent use of helpful strategies and may also involve the use of traditional healing methods relevant to the cultural identity of the client.

Referring to the work of North American theorists on multicultural counselling McLeod (2003) identifies 'the theme of empowerment, within an individual life, through self-help groups or by political involvement [as]...a distinctive and essential ingredient of multicultural counselling'(p255). Community and political involvement of this kind by the counsellor is not generally advocated within the training and theoretical underpinning of the three major schools of counselling and psychotherapy. The concept of boundary and client responsibility and autonomy is a major feature of the three schools and does not cohere easily with the notion of the counsellor as active social advocate.

To some extent, involvement in the community and political action is encouraged within the Person-centred approach to counselling and some elements or applications of Humanistic counselling approaches in organisations such as schools and business enterprise. However, this seems to be less about the counsellor making such an intervention on behalf of a client or clients or in direct response to perceived injustice.

The Black trainee

The Black trainee entering counselling training, like all trainees is encouraged to confront the positive and negative aspects of themselves as part of their self-exploration. The difference for the Black trainee is that the outcome of this exploration can be literally 'coloured' by their experience (denied or accepted) of racism. This might lead to an inspiration to reclaim the richness of their history and traditions by re-visiting past and present experiences. An informal assessment by the

trainee on how these experiences are accepted and valued within a training group is a strong indicator to the trainee of whether other deeper explorations will be respected. Whilst it is accepted that training is a place to make mistakes and to experiment there can be an emphasis on political correctness which inhibits honest exploration of issues of culture and 'race' in ways that are helpful to all trainees. It is almost certain that the Black counselling trainee will be in a minority, (quite often of one) in a training group. This in itself may not be unfamiliar territory for the trainee but the nature of counselling training makes the Black trainee particularly vulnerable.

Lago and Thompson, (1996) and Ridley (1995) explain that there is a need for the trainer to be aware of the particular needs of the Black trainee when issues of 'race' and culture are being explored. This would include ensuring that they (Black trainees) too are challenged about their prejudices and assumptions and encouraged to locate their origins.

Clarkson and Nippoda's (1998) research working with a group of counselling trainees from diverse cultural backgrounds demonstrated the importance of trainees being able to describe themselves in terms of racial and cultural aspects and that by doing this in their training it enabled them to view the training positively. The data arising from this research also showed that all course participants were challenged to explore their prejudices, attitudes and assumptions and that many assumptions and prejudices were dispelled in their explorations.

Recounting her training and post-qualification experiences as a clinical psychologist McInnis (2002) describes how she was accused of 'playing at being good' rather than having innately good qualities, how she had to fight black stereotyping of being poor, and with criminal intent, and against being bullied into specialising in sports psychology. McInnis gave examples of how she was excluded by peers; this action was defended on the grounds that they claimed to be protecting her and avoiding racism. '. (for wherever I was, was racism)… 'One person described it [racism] as a nasty smell that appeared with me.' (165). McInnis recalls how she was given support by tutors and colleagues but the perpetrators of racism remained unchallenged therefore the situation did not change.

Clarkson and Gilbert (1993), remind trainers to respect the uniqueness of individuals and to 'cultivate an attitude of delight in difference.' (p145) This 'delight', may, however, take the form of unhelpful inquisitiveness whereby the trainee becomes exotic and an expert witness. The authors add that it is the trainee's responsibility to

get the best from their own trainers and supervisors. This statement pre-supposes that the Black trainee is able to identify her needs and that she is confident that her trainer is capable of providing them. The research findings in chapter five indicate the opposite trainee experience.

Many of the pressures identified by Osler (1997) affecting black teachers such as, being accused of 'acting white' and then punished by black students, being expected to challenge all incidents of racism; being expected to deal with the welfare of black students, appear common to the black counselling trainee's experience. The expectations of white clients, black clients, training peers and tutors are similar to the ones outlined by Osler (1997). The black trainee senses an expectation that she has to be better than her white peers. This view and lived experience is supported elsewhere in this research and in the work of McInnis (2002) and Lawrence (2003). She has to be more resilient and resourceful. She has to be wise and is often treated as such by her peers and tutors. It is assumed that she is an expert and that she is 'dangerous' (Francis 2002) and powerful. She, meanwhile, often views herself as an outsider. Reminiscing on his early years as a therapist post-qualification, Lawrence (2003), a Black American described the humbling experience of working as a counsellor in Alaska and being 'diagnosed' as having 'white man's disease' by an Alaskan Native. Whilst the assessment was initially shocking, Lawrence learned how his training and lack of understanding led him to make assumptions about the needs and motivation of the Alaskan Native and he adapted his practice and knowledge base appropriately over a period of years to accommodate his new understanding.

Since then, Lawrence has had involvement (direct and indirect) in the training of over one thousand counsellors and a few hundred trainers in the United Kingdom. Lawrence discovered that when he enquired of counselling trainees whether racial and cultural issues had an impact on their own lives or might have on them as trainees if the training staff reflected 'images of modern society', their response has varied very little over the last twenty years from 'I don't know' to 'there would not be much difference at all' (p122).

Lawrence's revealing survey of one hundred and twenty counsellors and lecturers (70 white, 50 black) highlighted a number of points relating to the training experience of black and white counsellors:-

1. White students and trainers felt more comfortable than their black counterparts on training courses.
2. The 'race' and or culture of their tutor affected the training experience of the counsellor.
3. On the whole, students were not confident of their tutors' knowledge of issues of diversity.
4. Black counsellors were not confident about their white peers' 'use/knowledge of diversity issues'.

Concerns were expressed to Lawrence from the respondents about the lack of discussion about the issues raised in the survey. Lawrence quotes from respondents who felt unsafe in expressing their disquiet about the lack of input on issues of 'race' and culture in their counselling training programme. Others spoke of wanting to know more, not wanting to be seen as having a 'chip on their shoulder'. One response from a black trainer was their need to be seen as a trainer first and a black person second (p123).

Exploration of identity development in training

It is understood that the internal and external explorations connected with identity development will form part of the work and experiences of those in a counselling training group. Many courses encourage trainees to work with their own material rather than role- play. This can prove to be particularly emotive when issues of 'race', culture, ethnicity and identity arise. It requires the skilful and knowledgeable facilitation of the trainers and willingness on the part of the trainees to empathise with others and to challenge their own perceptions.

However, this training method can sometimes be at the expense of the black trainee when issues of 'race', culture and identity are explored because their frame of reference can be ignored or go unchallenged as other white trainees explore their feelings of guilt, anger and shame about the impact of racism. There is often an assumption that the black trainee is the expert on these matters and is there to 'educate and enlighten their peers'. Whilst to some extent this may hold some truth, the black trainees' needs to explore what racial and cultural identity means for them can go unmet. An extreme example of this is the black trainee who does not identify as black and yet is treated as such by her or his peers.

Use of racial identity models

A number of racial identity models developed in the United States used extensively in counselling training are becoming more widely used for illustrative training purposes in Britain. Models formulated by Cross in1971; Jackson, in 1975; Atkinson

Morten and Sue in 1989 and Helms in 1984 (revised in 1995, see Appendix 3), propose statuses/stages/phases of development by which a black and white identity is formed and expressed. The models have engendered lengthy debate and counter-claims as to their accuracy and relevance. Helms (1987), notes a major criticism of the models relating to black racial identity is the focus on behaviour of the black client taking little account of the impact of societal and environmental factors. Also, contained within the identity models are assumptions about the direction of healthy development for the individual. The following chapter is devoted to examining these further and to explore their relevance to counselling in Britain.

CHAPTER 3

THE RELEVANCE OF RACIAL IDENTITY MODELS TO COUNSELLOR TRAINING

Racial identity models seek to provide a schema and explanation for the behaviour, attitudes and relationships of individuals from particular racial groupings. Identity theorists propose that to a lesser or greater extent, people view themselves and others as racial beings and are continually assessing and negotiating their relationships with others on this basis. This is a lifelong process influenced by a number of factors and experiences and can have a direct effect on the identity development of the individual and those she/he comes into contact with.

Racial identity models developed in the United States (Cross (1970), and (1995); Atkinson and Sue (1989); and Helms (1995) have appeared more recently in counselling literature produced in the United Kingdom and have been offered as useful training tools related to cross-cultural counselling since the early 1990s (Lago and Thompson (1996), Palmer and Laungani (1999)).

Identity development

Identity development as theorised by Erikson (1985) involves a series of stages and experiences that an individual goes through during which they complete a number of life tasks that enables them to mature and function effectively as adults.

Clients who come for counselling often report that difficulties, and or traumatic life events resulting in change, has led them to question their self-concept; self-image and in many cases their identity. Identity can be defined as a dynamic social construct that includes feelings and attitudes towards the self. This includes learned behaviours and beliefs associated with a particular cultural group or series of groups that the individual has a commitment to along with ideas about heritage or lineage. Successful psychological adjustment is often linked to whether an individual feels affirmed and content with aspects of their identity and the fluidity of that identity (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987). Racial identity theory and the models developed from it arise from an understanding that 'race' is a social and cultural construction, used to refer to ethnic minorities or groups who are socially, economically and politically disadvantaged (oppressed) because of their ethnicity or perceived 'racial' distinctiveness. Helms (1995) and other racial identity development theorists assume that all individuals, regardless of their ethnicity experience a racial identity development process.

Racial Identity

The concept of racial identity is contested and queried as a dubious notion as exampled in the work of Razir (1995), and Malik (2003). Those who are resistant to the idea of racial identity argue that racial identity models and theories erroneously imply a uniformity and commonality of experience. Further, that they are largely essentialist in their premise denying or minimising other variable factors such as, gender, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, dual or mixed heritage issues may have more significance for some individuals than their ethnic origin. Another criticism is that the primary focuses and origin of racial identity theory concerned an attempt to categorise and define the 'other', the other being non-white. Recent work on racial identity development amongst whites as developed by Helms 1995 and others does little to satisfy the critics. Another important criticism of the use of racial identity theory in Britain is that the models postulated are geographically and historically located in the social framework of North America and are not readily applicable to other nations. It is argued that these racial identity models operate from a frame of reference in which the impact of colonisation plays a smaller role and where in the United States it is more acceptable to view United States minority groups as a having a shared history of migration and or slavery. This argument ignores the decimation of the indigenous United States population.

In their review of research conducted into 'Negro identity', Proshansky and Newton (1973) note the research conclusions did not generally take into account the environmental factors of poverty, poor education provision, the legacy of slavery, the experience of racism. In addition there was class bias; working class Black people investigated were compared with middle class white people.

Proshansky and Newton (1973) suggest that Black identity was partly formed out of, and in response to adversity rather than organic in its development, (p177).

Research into the identity development of black children in the United States indicated that the children identified strongly with white society and were rejecting of their own ethnic group and the fact of their blackness. This identification decreased with age but has implications for the black adults and the development of their identity. What emerges from this review of the research is a series of elements associated with black identity that largely exist today in the United States and in Britain amongst those of African American and African Caribbean origin in particular.

1. Children learn that black is bad because it is not white and are fearful of black people who are unreliable and lack ambition, especially black males.

2. Children are able to make distinctions and notice racial difference as early as three years of age. Their behaviour and self-esteem is developed in a socialisation process which mimics the experience of their parents who may well have low self-esteem as a result of racism or fear of it.

3. The persistence of the stereotypical views of black male-female relationships. Black girls are encouraged to be more independent and aspire to white collar jobs.

4. The perpetuation of 'shadeism' and the preference for light-skinned children.

If Stuart Hall's (1996) view is accepted that Black identity is learned and that the ideas above are passed on through the generations then this has particularly serious implications for the black individual in terms of their identity development, implying the perpetuation of internalised racism/oppression as well as celebration of distinctiveness and difference. By taking on the agenda of racial identity or Black identity in a positive way, it could be argued that Blacks are reclaiming a positive notion of difference or 'Other' in response to the negative categorisation by whites that Fanon (1967) identifies.

Those in favour of racial identity theory argue that the use of models enable us to reach some understanding about the growth and development of others and brings 'race' into the open with a discussion about the reality of racism at the forefront. This is particularly important in counselling training as so often statistics have shown that black clients, who have less access to talking therapies in any case, are over-represented in the mental health system, and are more likely to terminate counselling relationships early. Some of this may be due to the black clients' perception that they have been misunderstood or that they cannot be helped.

Sue and Sue (1990) Thompson and Carter (1997) assert that at points of distress people may experience racial conflicts more profoundly and therefore need a skilled practitioner who is able to accurately assess the cultural identity of the client. Central to Sue and Sue's (1990) description of the culturally skilled counsellor is the notion that the counsellor has an awareness of their assumptions values and biases and an awareness of their reactions to other racial and ethnic groups. A counsellor who is comfortable with their own identity is likely to be respectful of the self-definition of others (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987)

Racial identity development models - a brief summary.

At the time of writing, the racial identity models referred to most in the field of counselling and psychotherapy in the United Kingdom originate from the work of theorists in the United States. The Nigresence model, developed by Cross in 1971 and then updated in 1990 is marked by five stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalisation, internalization-commitment. Cross, (1995) describes the process by which a black person moves from being self-rejecting of their racial identity at the pre-encounter stage, towards integration and acceptance of a positive black identity.

Since 1984, Helms' (Appendix 3) has proposed and revised racial identity models for white and Black identity. Recently, this work has been developed to refer to the identity development of 'people of color'. Helms' (1995) model for white racial identity refers to six separate statuses. The six statuses, contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion-emersion and autonomy delineate the person's move away from a conscious or unconscious denial of their racial identity towards a clearer understanding of white identity without being racist. According to Helms, there are five development statuses for 'people of color': conformity, dissonance, immersion-emersion, internalization, integrative awareness. The model shows the sequence of statuses that a 'person of color' might go through as they become aware of the negative influences of racism occurring internally and externally and are more able to value their own racial identity and appreciate the racial identity of others. In Helms' view the general developmental issue and direction for whites is to move away from an assumption of entitlement; and for Blacks, to move away from internalised racism and to overcome racial stereotyping. Helms declares that her purpose in developing both models of racial identity is to provide a conceptual framework for systematic diagnosis of the interactions between groups and individuals in the environment so that matters can be resolved and helpful interventions made by paying attention to the interplay of 'racial dynamics'.

Sue and Sue (1990) have created a Racial/Cultural Identity Development model that has been derived and extended from the Minority Identity Development model proposed by Atkinson, Morten and Sue (p95). This five stage model is, similar to the work of Helms' with the exception of stage 4 (see Appendix 3b) which is referred to as introspection rather than internalization. The model aims to illustrate some of the

implications of how identity development and interactions between counsellor and client are affected at different stages.

The general pattern presented in all of the identity models is the recognised shift in the individual away from a negative attitude about their own racial identity towards a reasoned, balanced and positive perspective about racial identity and a willingness to collaborate authentically with other racial groups. Helms (1995); Cross (1990); and Sue and Sue (1990) emphasise that the models they offer do not represent linear development and that individuals may be in more than one status/stage at any one time. Helms (1995), illustrates this well in the annotated transcript of a discussion amongst a diverse group talking about inter-racial adoption. The theorists all agree that significant life events, interactions or experiences often act as a catalyst for the movement through each of the stages/statuses described and that this movement is not in one direction.

Black identity in Britain

Hall (1996) refers to Black identity as 'something constructed, told spoken, not simply found' as perhaps white identity is in Britain. Black identity in Britain, constructed in the wake of a history of colonisation, oppression, slavery and racism has to be 'learned' but this does not mean that it is a stable or fixed identity around which assumptions or generalisations can be made about what constitutes a Black identity. Hall asks for recognition to be given to the diversity of social experiences, and cultural identities which compose the category "Black". (p166). This point is underlined by Bakare-Yusuf (1997) and interrogated further by Ifekwunigwe (1997) who contends that

> '...the prevailing and inconsistent social and political stance that anyone who does not look White is seen as Black impinges on identity construction for many multiethnic métis (se) people.'
> (p.129)

However, despite this argument to consider all aspects of identity development, Black identity is often prioritised over gender identity by students (Housee; 2001) and by counselling trainees interviewed for this research.

Criticisms and questions about racial identity development models

An important criticism and caution in the use of racial identity models is the tendency amongst some practitioners to universalise their application without taking into account individual differences that may not be readily apparent. There is the

danger that the stages/statuses of development referred to in the models can be used to label or stigmatise individuals, or that the models and their stages can be misinterpreted and therefore lead to gross errors and diagnoses in the counselling relationship.

An example of this could be the mistaken belief by a counselling practitioner that individuals from the same ethnic group experience similar life experiences in terms of their racial identity development.

As Myers et al (1991) point out, identity models, (which included models for racial, gender, sexual orientation) have often been developed in response to social and political change or events and are therefore of their time and not necessarily relevant in present conditions. In addition, the models rarely consider individuals experiencing multiple oppressions.

For example, Lloyd (1995) argues strongly for the centrality of disability in the feminist identity model, incorporating 'race' and class. This and similar tendencies amongst scholars and activists for singular issues have been very powerful in raising awareness and providing a voice for silenced groups within already oppressed groups by the development of such models, but can obscure the real issues of oppression and shift energy away from instituting change to policy making and rhetoric.

As conceptual frameworks, racial identity models can be useful in assisting counselling practitioners in training and beyond to examine their own frame of reference and possibly identify the frame of reference of their clients. Along with other data this can serve as a means of examining the development and progress of clients as the counselling relationship develops over time. The models could also be used to encourage evaluation and re-evaluation of all counselling relationships regardless of whether the issue of 'race' is a feature of the counsellor-client interaction.

Study and illustrative use of racial identity models challenge the trainee counsellor to examine the impact of racism on the individual and oppressed groups.

A further criticism that is levelled at these models is the assumption that healthy psychological functioning occurs when the individual has reached the stage or status of internalization/integrative awareness, and thus has resolved issues relating to their racial identity and the racial identity of those from other groups. Also, that the models infer that white racial identity development is about developing positive attitudes towards other 'oppressed' groups rather than exploring internal attitudes and

their causes. Thompson (2003) argues that Helms' model is organised to make white people feel better about themselves and does not properly address white privilege. Bearing in mind that Helms (1995) is a black counselling theoretician it could be argued that by creating this model she replicates some of the dimensions of the black counsellor white client dyad (see appendix five) referred to later in this chapter and chapter six, that of being deferential to whites as well as demonstrating aspects of her own internalised oppression.

At present, there is no reference to the increasing number of individuals who identify as biracial or mixed-race in view of their lineage or parentage. Root (2000) is critical of the racial identity development models offered so far because they force those of mixed parentage into one category which leads to a denial of the other part of their identity. Whilst critical of the models, Root (2000) accepts that for some individuals there is the possibility that they may 'seek refuge' in identifying with the oppressed group or be assigned to this group by others. This could increase their sense of difference and experience of oppression because they have not made an active choice and may wish to celebrate all aspects of their heritage equally. Root (2000) claims that racial identity models do not allow for the rejection of the biracial individual's rejection from one or both camps and their own wish to remain unclassified. Root (2000) suggests that there are four ways of identifying which are not mentioned within the current models. The first is being identified or identifying with others; the second is the individual identifying with the community they were reared in which may be significantly different to their visible ethnicity; the third is identifying with two camps simultaneously or selectively; the fourth is refusing to be categorised. Root (2000) offers an alternative non-sequential model of three transitions: exposure, competition, reflective appraisal. This experiential model acknowledges individual experience and the different ways in which experience and information is processed and integrated.

In an informal discussion with a black Jamaican counsellor about Helms' racial identity development models her assertion was that model was of use for her work with clients in England but unhelpful in her potential work with clients in Jamaica. Although my colleague acknowledged the past and current impact of colonisation on existing social relationships in Jamaican between Blacks and whites, her analysis was that racism, as defined in this work, was not a distinct feature for her in her experience as a Jamaican, although shadeism was.

Similarly, Kamenou, (see Curtis 2004) carrying out research into the workplace experiences of women from ethnic minorities found that her interviewees 'identified with her difference' and wrongly assumed that she too, had experienced discriminatory practices, dilemmas and stereotypes in her working life. Curtis (2004) notes that '...Kamenou, a Cypriot, had never experienced the persistent prejudice she was hearing about. The research participants wrongly assumed that Kamenou had located her racial identity as 'Black' as it is defined in this work.

The racial identity models produced so far do not examine whiteness other than showing that white is not being labelled Black or 'Other'? Those most critical of Black identity development models focus on the implication that Blacks could be assessed as developing healthily through the model only if they are adapting successfully to white norms. Further questions about the expertise of the assessor using the development models and what use is made of this diagnosis in terms of helpful interventions are also raised.

Racial identity theorists recognise the potential for therapists to categorise and pathologise their clients based on the models they propose. As an antidote to this there are recommendations from Helms (1995) Sue and Sue (1990) and Carter (1995) that the practitioner makes an assessment of their own status or stage within the model and that they explore the implications and potential of working with clients who are assessed as being at different stages of identity development.

Using racial identity models in training

Helms' framework of relationships types (see Appendix 3a) provides scope for relevant analysis of the interpersonal dynamics present in counselling relationships in Britain with tentative application of United States racial identity models. This approach could usefully be extended to an exploration of the black counselling trainee's experience in the training group and in their supervised practice as counsellors. This is referred to in the discussion of the findings later in Chapter 5.

As with D'Andrea and Daniels' (1991) model which attempts to describe counselling training development, Helms' model could be used to illustrate the interface between counselling training and trainees. In this analysis, the counselling training establishment (white trainers and trainees) in Britain could be assessed as being at the 'Contact' status of Helms'(1995) model. Black trainees who might be assessed as being at the conformity, dissonance or immersion-emersion status/stage are likely to engage in a wide range of interpersonal and internal conflicts with trainers and their

peers. (see Appendix 3a). The research evidence indicates that some of these conflicts remain unresolved or that the parties involved were unable to identify them. The experience of the Black trainee is ultimately affected and their ability to synthesise their understanding and experiences for the benefit of their clients and themselves is compromised unless there are opportunities to analyse their experience with knowledgeable practitioners.

The assessed difference in racial identity levels between the black trainee/s and white trainee/s or between the trainer and white trainee or trainees and the single Black trainee on a course as is often the case, is an important factor affecting the training experience for all concerned. By their very presence, or in most cases, absence from counselling training groups, the Black trainee affects the way that issues of 'race' and culture are studied and explored. Parker and Schwartz (2002) refer to the feelings of shame and guilt that arise in white counselling trainees when addressing issues of 'race' and culture. These responses have been reported on at length since the inception of anti-racism training and 'race' awareness training since 1970s. Helms (1995), also refers to the feelings of depression and guilt that accompany the white person as they become aware of racism.

Parker and Schwartz (2002) acknowledge that these reactions in white trainees need the skilful facilitation of the trainer. They observe that feelings of shame and guilt in an individual severely limits their ability to be empathic in their understanding of others, a key requirement of the counsellor and an essential requirement for a white counsellor working with a black client.

Of the two responses, Parker and Schwartz (2002) identify shame as the more damaging and overwhelming response. 'Shame stems from self-blame in which attributions are personal internal global and uncontrollable', leading to counter-transferential (attributing feelings to others that do not belong with them) responses. This is of particular significance in the training environment where it is likely that the Black trainee is in a minority (often of one). The research evidence here shows that the Black trainee is often the recipient of white trainees' and trainers' guilt and shame, or, that their focus is inward and the needs of the Black trainee are forgotten. It is important to note here that the Black trainee is also likely to be experiencing feelings of guilt, shame and anger. There is little provision for exploration of this or anticipation by trainers of this as a possibility.

Fanon (1967) describes the effect of the combination of shame and distrust that might occur, in a black-white dyad where the communications are ambiguous

> '...Shame and self-contempt. Nausea. When people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color(sic) When they dislike me, they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked into The infernal circle.'
>
> (p.116)

My experience as a trainer of using these models as a starting point for further discussion and examination of 'race' and cultural issues has resulted in some in depth analysis, criticism and dialogue between trainees about their relevance in the United Kingdom and about the categories posited by the racial identity theorists.

A controversial outcome arose from one particular training session when I invited trainees to assess their own level of identity development in terms of an identity model and to seek an assessment from their peers and compare the two. Some trainees were surprised by the disparity between self and peer assessment results and others had their self-assessment confirmed. What was particularly noticeable about the assessments made by participants is how often they self-assessed as being further on in their identity development than subsequent discussion and their ability to identify salient issues would suggest. Nevertheless the exercise proved useful in advancing discussion about the inherent dangers of assumptions in assessment and diagnoses and also promoted further discussion about identity and perception of self and others.

Helms (1995) demonstrates how different counsellor-client combinations are affected more by their 'expressed racial identity' in terms of the model than the racial group to which they belong. Four distinct relationship types are described: 'parallel', 'regressive', 'progressive' and 'crossed' (see Appendix 3a).

In a 'parallel' relationship, the participants have similar attitudes and beliefs about blacks and whites. In 'regressive' relationship, one of the participants, usually the one with the most social power, relates to others at a less sophisticated level than their ego status would indicate 'regressing' to align themselves with the other participant/s in the relationship who often have less social power. An example of a regressive relationship can be seen as follows:- a white liberal counselling trainer in the company of those who express racist views initially attempts to challenge those views but later may defer to the views of the majority in the group, remaining silent

or 'agreeing' with those views to a limited extent. In the progressive relationship, the participant with the most social power relates to others and their experiences in the relationship from a sophisticated ego status. In a crossed relationship, the racial identity ego status of the participants is in direct opposition.

The use of racial identity development models in counsellor training is useful because it can name attitudes and behaviours that trainees may be reluctant to name or admit to in the knowledge that their views are unacceptable. The relationship types identified by Helms are also of use in the analysis of counselling or supervisory dyads.

By removing the binary of black and white, the identity development model developed by Root (2000) allows for individual exploration of identity without resorting to oppositional black-white polarities and places greater emphasis on experiences and how individuals, (particularly those of mixed parentage) might make sense of their experience which are partly informed by racial identity and also by individuals in their immediate environment.

Internalised racism/internalised oppression

The terms internalised racism and internalised oppression are used interchangeably throughout this research. Internalised racism can be defined simply as black self-hatred. Fanon's description of the transformation of black self-hatred to the development of a positive view of blackness and Black identity provides some ideas of the internal conflicts that are associated with internalised racism and oppression.

> 'As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them to be aware of it. I try then to find value for what is bad- since I have unthinkingly conceded that the black man is the color (sic) of evil. In order to terminate this neurotic situation, in which I am compelled to choose an unhealthy, conflictual solution, fed on fantasies, hostile, inhuman in short, I have only one solution: to rise above this absurd drama that others have staged round me, to reject the two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal.'
>
> (p.197)

Internalised racism is an attitude that is difficult to define as it manifests itself in a number of ways as outlined by Ridley (1995) and described in some detail by Cross (1995) in his depiction of anti-black attitudes:

> 'There are some Blacks for whom being black is very important, not as a positive force but as a negative reference group. Blackness and black people define their internal model of what they dislike. They look out upon black people with a perspective that comes very close to what one might expect to find in the thinking of White racists. Anti-black Blacks loathe other Blacks, feel alienated from them, and do not see Blacks or the black community as a potential or actual source of personal support. Their vision of blackness is dominated by negative, racist stereotypes; conversely, they may hold positive racial stereotypes of White people and White culture. When in positions of leadership, anti-black Blacks can be very effective in weaving an ideology that bashes black leaders, black institutions, black studies, the black family, and black culture.'
>
> (p.99)

Its identification is of central importance to the Black counselling trainee and Black counsellor as the undetected presence of internalised racism has a hugely damaging effect. Littlewood and Lipsedge (1989); Ridley (1995); and Rose (1997) give case study examples of the effect of internalised racism. From a psychodynamic perspective Rose (1997), illustrates how the complexity of internalised racism begins at an early age and can remain invisible and can be suppressed and or denied particularly when black counsellors work with black clients. Like Yazar, (1996) Rose (1997) was employed as a counsellor to work with a minority ethnic group and was immediately confronted by her own internalised racism (p93). In stating that she 'dares' to work with internalised racism Rose acknowledges that her presence as a Black counsellor will provoke the existence of latent or obvious internalised racism. Even if the client's original reason for coming to counselling is not ostensibly necessarily to do with 'race'.

Identifying and addressing internalised racism in the Black trainee counsellor is essential and I suspect goes undetected by most trainers, counsellors and supervisors. Ridley (1995) shows how a black counsellor or counselling trainee who has little or no understanding of their internalised racism is capable of denying or ignoring their client's experience of racism. He asserts that the black counsellor would be more of a liability than a white counsellor, especially if the counsellor regards herself as an expert in working with minority ethnic clients. Lawrence (2003) asserts that 'internalised racism' is a daily challenge for the black counsellor in training and subsequent qualified practice.

Alleyne (2004) refers to the internal oppressor as 'an aspect of the self' of black peoples, which has an influence on present day black-white relationships. Alleyne

(2004) posits that the 'internal oppressor' has developed as a result of the historical experiences of oppression 'real or perceived' and is carried through generations. Alleyne and others suggest that the internal oppressor is capable of damaging black people to an even greater extent than the experience of racism and affects black-black relations, (see Appendix 4).

It is likely that this internal oppressor contributes to what Cheng (2001) calls 'racial melancholia' (p 15) which has a lifelong effect on all black people. A concern with this analysis from Alleyne and Cheng, both working from a psychodynamic or psychoanalytic framework, is that it could encourage a negative assessment of black people's behaviour attributing all causes of mental distress to the influences of historical oppression with less focus on current experiences of oppression.

Blacks in therapy

In defining some of the issues for Blacks in therapy, Jones (1985) draws attention to a potential in the encounter that the black client may have little or no control over, that of the therapist's response to them which might not arise from the client's own issues and concerns.

> 'Any client can invoke in a therapist an unhelpful emotional response; what is noteworthy...is that it appears that black patients may evoke more complicated countertransference reactions more frequently. The reason for this seems to be that social images of Blacks still make them easier targets for therapists' projections and that the culturally different client provides more opportunities for empathic failures.'
>
> (p.178)

Banks (1999) has observed that there has been scholarly interest in the outcomes of therapeutic work with black clients since the 1940s. Anthropological studies, Freudian and post-Freudian studies have often depicted the black client as exotic or 'Other' with primitive drives and feelings whilst whites are assessed to have more complex and subtle emotions. Parker et al (1999) expand on this notion by describing how culture is seen as a form of sustenance for the 'healthy black client' whilst the 'healthy white client' is endowed with an inner life, autonomy and sense of mastery over the external world, (p82). Banks (1999) argues that the racist ideology within psychoanalytical theory is explicit; the black client raising issues about cultural distinctiveness is to be interpreted by the therapist as immature or child-like relating

to the 'Freudian' anal stage of development in infancy. In this anal stage, black is associated with dirt and white with cleanliness. The extension of this theory is that black refers to 'them' white to 'us' and that racism is attributed to father hatred. Given the national and international influence of Freudian theory in psychoanalytical practice and psychodynamic therapy it is clear how Blacks in therapy could be assessed by white and Black counsellors from the perspective of a deficit model, with the black client in need of 'repair' at a very basic level.

Ethnic matching

The results of research into the efficacy of the ethnic- matching of counsellor and client are inconclusive. Helms and Parham (1981) reported that black people were more likely to express a preference for a black counsellor if they were at the encounter immersion or internalisation stage. This stage relates to the racial identity model developed by Cross (1971), and later by Helms (1995) (see appendices three and four), discussed earlier in chapter three.

McLeod (2003) quotes the work of Sue et al in 1991 which showed that ethnic matching between client and counsellor resulted in fewer client drop-outs and where language was compatible and better overall therapeutic outcome. On language compatibility, Moodley (2001) suggests that there is a requirement for minority ethnic clients accessing therapy to 'speak 'outside' its sentences, its own cultural spaces and places'. Moodley (2001) argues that paradoxically, western psychotherapy, whilst aiming and claiming to be 'inclusive' and culturally sensitive may ignore the real needs of the 'Other' (minority ethnic client) because:

> '... [Its] grammar and syntax...is deeply rooted in its culture, history, memory and pain. It is this pain that constructs the 'Other', sometimes as the negative 'Other', projecting on to it everything that feels alien, foreign, undesirable, unacceptable.'
>
> (p.273)

The work of Shoaib and Peel (2003) highlights the importance of ethnic matching and sharing of language. A case study by Gowrinsunkur (2002) describes a black male client previously assessed as being 'unco-operative', 'hard to help', with a 'narcissistic personality organisation'. Gowrinsunkur demonstrated how the use of mother-tongue in therapy helped the counsellor to build a more effective helping relationship with the client. Gowrinsunkur (2002) showed how some of the words and idioms used by client and counsellor in their mother-tongue were not translatable

as they do not convey the specific cultural symbolism that the phrases evoke about a way of life or religious belief. It was the expression of these things and the opportunity to explore his traditional values and cultural losses in a safe and understanding environment that enabled the client to make progress.

A review completed by Atkinson (1987) found that clients preferred working with counsellors with the same or similar ethnic background and class. Smith (1987) showed that therapists preferred to work with clients with whom they can identify. Clients who focus on their internal intrapsychic frame of reference were preferred to those that presented a mixture of intrapsychic and social, environmental- external conditions as cause factors for their distress. This is particularly important in view of the training that most counsellors receive which places a high priority on intrapsychic realms.

Black Therapy training and its discourse pays attention to the internal world, (intrapsychic) spiritual dimensions and social, environmental external factors. Agoro (1998/9) and Taylor-Muhammad (2001) provide useful descriptions of this approach. Lowenstein (1987); Jones (1987); Ridley (1995); and Alladin (1993) express doubts about the value of insistence on ethnic matching. A reasonable objection to the demand for exclusive ethnic matching is that black counsellors will have absorbed the norms and values of the indigenous population, and may have internalised racist attitudes as a result of their training. If this is accepted then Black counsellors are likely to be no more sensitive to the needs of black clients than white counsellors. In support of this argument, Enrico E. Jones' (1987) research showed that black and white clients in psychotherapy are more alike than they are different. In making comparisons, Jones referred to the similarities in socio-economic status and educational level that often exists between self-referred black and white clients who choose to enter psychotherapy. Also, noted were similarities in their sense of psychological discomfort and desire to change (p175).

The arguments for ethnic matching that focus on client and counsellor compatibility are persuasive but do not take account of counsellor and client geographical mobility and availability, class or socio-economic differences. Laungani (1999) raises a similar objection pointing to the disparity between visible similarity and how it might obscure class, caste and religious differences that exist between counsellor and client to the detriment of the relationship. In addition, Moodley (2001) argues that the multiple identities that a client or counsellor may acknowledge in themselves in

relation to their physical ability, sexual orientation, spirituality may mean that being black is not central to their identity nor valued more than any other aspect. Moodley (2003b) also suggests that examining race as a variable' in the therapeutic relationship may be troublesome and traumatic for counsellor and client and not relevant to the client's presenting issues. He suggests with some clients it may be safer to explore issues of gender first saving discussion on race until the relationship has developed in maturity (p130).

Ridley (1995) suggests that a black client, in specifically choosing a black counsellor might be trying to avoid a certain kind of relationship and the possible challenges they might encounter from working with a white therapist. If the ideas behind this proposal are reversed and applied to an ethnically matched white client and counsellor, it is evident that the motives behind the white client's choice are not subject to such harsh criticism or analysis. The differences between the two agents in the relationship (such as class, disability, sexual orientation, gender) may emerge as the relationship progresses but their shared whiteness is not, in itself a cause for concern, nor is their potential for collusion, denial or avoidance highlighted as a reason for white client to consider working with say, a Black counsellor to avoid such pitfalls.

In England, the majority of counsellors are white and therefore white clients who choose to work with a white counsellor can do so imperceptibly. In this situation white clients are rarely accused of avoiding a certain kind of relationship. Case examples of white clients' apparent rejection of assigned black counsellors supplied in the discussion and analysis chapter of this research are not easily proven because of the subtlety of racial prejudice exhibited by the white clients concerned.

Smith (1987) found, white therapists were also avoiding certain relationships which promised 'anger and despair' by screening out potential black women clients suggesting that they were unsuitable for counselling or psychotherapy. In Britain, this screening process operates to deny some black patients' access to psychotherapy as their diagnosis defines them as unsuitable for talking therapies.

In their study of clients rating their ethnically similar counsellors, Coleman, et al (1995) found that black clients generally expressed a preference for an ethnically matched counsellor. The researchers considered the possible influences of respondents wanting to make a 'socially desirable response' noting that the students

involved in the research may have been experiencing personal identity issues as they were in a minority in a predominately white college.

Being a minority student on a white majority training programme is a common experience for most black trainee counsellors in the United Kingdom. The research findings (Chapter 5) showed that the majority of the interviewees were keen to have the experience of working with a Black counsellor and Black supervisor and this did not appear to be about their desire to 'make a socially desirable response'

Russell, Fujino et al (1996) found that ethnically matched therapists judged their clients to have a higher psychological functioning than 'mis-matched' therapists. The researchers did concede that the clients in the mis-matched pairing may have been more severely disturbed but it was not possible to prove this conclusively.

McLeod (2003) quotes a small research study undertaken by Wade and Bernstein in which four counselling trainees (two white, two black) received cultural awareness training and four trainees who did not. The effectiveness of this training was then reviewed by evaluating their effectiveness as counsellors from the feedback of their clients. The counsellors trained in cultural awareness, (black and white) were seen as 'more expert, attractive, trustworthy, empathic and accepting than their black and white peers who had not received the training. The evidence here also suggested that ethnic matching of client and counsellor was not a significant factor when compared with the counsellor's cultural competence.

Ethnic matching- implications for Black counsellors

The issue of ethnic matching is an important one for black counsellors for three main reasons. Firstly, as trainees, counsellors are usually required to access personal therapy they will go through a similar process to that of any other client. Deciding to work with a Black therapist may be for reparative, supportive or educative reasons. The impact of internalised racism may be difficult to discern and will need extra vigilance in view of the dangers of internalised racism and appropriate supervision. Secondly, as Moodley and Dhingra (1998) suggest, the opportunity to freely choose a counsellor is open to white clients in a way it is not for black clients (p296). Banks (1999) points out, there is potential for over identification or a lack of identification on the part of the white therapist. The 'emotional material' of the black client can have a 'disorienting effect' on the white therapist and thus inhibit the therapeutic process. For instance the relationship could focus on the counsellor using the client to find out people from other cultures, collusive practice by the counsellor, or to

exorcise their own racism. This can lead the black client towards self-blame (internalised oppression/racism), doubting their own experience. The client's active choice of a black counsellor places additional responsibility on him or her to enter the 'complex and confusing world of 'race', (Appendices 4 and 5).

Ridley (1995) concludes that trainee counsellors should access personal therapy from a skilled multi-cultural counsellor of the same 'race' as the majority client population. The logic of this is that the trainee can resolve counter-transferential (or, oppositional feelings, in this case towards white people) issues in therapy before working with white clients. Ridley does suggest the reverse for trainee white counsellors who might be providing a service to an organisation working mainly with black clients.

Black-White Dyads

Implications of the dyads for the researcher

The racial identity models currently developed do offer a means for discussing some of the dynamics and complexities of counselling relationships which involve black-white dyads. Whilst the dyads are useful as a means of identifying some relationship issues within counselling the dyads discussed in this research and presented in appendices four and five they are partial explorations of a complex relationship. The dyads do not take biracial or bicultural identity into account. The descriptors as they appear in the dyads tend to be antagonistic or oppositional in their theme. It is emphasised here the oppositional features present in the dyads produced are devised to illustrate 'difficulties' rather than co-operative acts. Black and white trainees and tutors are not destined to always be in conflict or working against each other. My personal experiences of successful white-black relations including a marriage testify to this whilst also recognising the potential for difficulties.

Some of the research participants gave examples of the ways in which they had been supported by white peers and friends. For example, BR remarked that her success as an employed counsellor was 'down to white people' emphasising that the Black community had not been helpful or supportive of her career development.

The possible dyads co-existing in these relationships, (e.g. black counsellor-white client; black client-white counsellor; black client-black counsellor; white counsellor-white client) and the power differentials between usually the vulnerable client and more powerful counsellor will have an effect on these relationships. The work of

Lago and Thompson (1989 and 2002) is drawn upon substantially here to explore the implications outlined below (see also Appendices 4 and 5).

White counsellors and Black clients

Whilst there is some debate about the core theoretical model principle within counselling training, Moodley (1998) asserts that

> 'Whichever model one chooses to use, it seems imperative that the issue of white counsellor identity development is taken seriously in the therapeutic practice with black ` people.'
> (p. 503)

In his study of white counsellors, Banks (1999) found from his initial questionnaire results that of the 338 replies less than half of counsellors had experience of working with black clients. Over one third (34.2%) of the respondents worked in independent practice, and probably saw no need to consider the needs of black clients in any case. A third (34.6%) worked in an ethnically mixed urban environment. Over a third (37%) lived in mainly white suburban locale, this being an indicator of their economic status and capacity. 34-37% of the white counsellors surveyed stated that they were engaged in networks with African Caribbean and Asian friends. The white counsellors in the research acknowledged that black clients may have specific needs, and some were found to be more pre-disposed towards a tolerance of Black African Caribbean clients than towards South Asian clients, who were seen as more responsible for their circumstances. Taking personal responsibility for one's fate and having the sense of power to do this is at the heart of Humanistic counselling theory, which can tend to deny socio-political and economic constraints that the individual may encounter. This argument for personal responsibility, favoured by counselling practitioners, can also deny the reality of the impact of racism.

Banks (1999) found that:

> 'The majority of counsellors were found to have no specific training and not to have read about the particular counselling needs of black client groups.'
> (p.161)

Banks (1999) wondered whether more recently trained counsellors would have undertaken reading or training relating to the needs of black clients. The indications from my research findings are that this is generally not the case. In conclusion Banks (1999) proposed that it is the *level* (my emphasis) of academic training and

qualification, not necessarily their level of counselling qualification, which best prepared counsellors to 'conceptualise the distinct needs of the culturally different' (p.183). This hypothesis invites an extended discussion and research work on training and the relative importance of academic studies versus vocational skills training partly discussed in Chapter 3. Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this research.

Black client-White counsellor dyad

The dyad of black client-white counsellor may yield a relationship in which the client distrusts the counsellor and the counsellor misunderstands or is anxious with the client (see Appendix 5). Alternatively, as Tuckwell (2001) discovered in dyadic research, the black client might defer to the 'white parental imago' of the counsellor. Thompson and Jenal (1994) and Dhillon and Ubhi (2003) found that when working with white counsellors, black clients tended not to mention 'race' and did not necessarily connect personal crisis or impaired social functioning with racial incidents they may have experienced, thus, in effect, letting their counsellor and themselves 'off the hook' of exploring the impact of racism or the therapist's own racism. They also suggest that black clients learn to negotiate their counsellors' 'non-racial' or 'race'-avoidant postures, learning that issues of 'race' are not for exploration or are too difficult within the relationship.

There is also the potential of a difference in world views for counsellor and client. The client may see their allegiance to community and group values as a priority above that of individual concerns about the self. Dhillon and Ubhi (2003) give an example of predominant thinking within South Asian culture, that 'religion and personal life are neither separate nor antagonistic'; a view less popular within contemporary western society.

A case study produced by Ward and Banks (2002) shows how a black client indicated his preference to work with a white counsellor (Ward) who herself was in a mixed-race relationship because he was able to express some of his more negative feelings about black people without restraint. He sought counselling to explore his relationships with his estranged white wife and current girlfriend. He explained that he actively sought out white partners admitting that:

> 'No way could I tell a black woman that I was not attracted to black women. I just couldn't.'
> (p. 187)

As for his views on talking about this with a black counsellor:

> '... Look I don't care how
> good she would be as a counsellor, this is a thing
> I would never ever discuss with any black woman. No
> way!'
> (p. 187)

This client's response highlights a number of race related issues. It is debatable whether the white therapist's role is to explore such race related issues with the black client given that this was not their reason for seeking therapeutic help. Ward and Banks (2002) are clear that it was not. A contradictory view is that this black client could be challenged to explore his racial identity and his internalised racism without being deterred significantly from his reasons for entering counselling.

It was apparent that the client had strong fears about the negative or reproachful response he might get from a black female counsellor. A black counsellor working with this client might want to discover and challenge the reality of his fears. A further line of enquiry might be to consider whether the client, as he claims, would make similar utterances to a black male or black female therapist.

The client stated that he saw his mother as being 'over-critical and controlling' and that these attributes were also evident in other relationships he had with black girlfriends. We could speculate that a white therapist may be interested in a white male client talking about his relationships with white women in this way and his preference for black women being based on his mother's dominant and overbearing attitudes.

From the black and white trainees' point of view there is a significant amount to be learnt from a case study such as this if presented by a trainer for detailed study, and additional considerations for the trainer as to how the discussion of the case study would be facilitated in a group where the Black trainee is in the minority.

Cultural transference issues

Ward and Banks (2002) argue that counsellors need to be aware of issues of cultural transference. Cultural transference, as defined by Ridley, (see Ward and Banks 2002, p.186) refers to the positive or negative emotional reactions of a client from one ethnic group being transferred to the therapist of a different ethnic group. Here, 'transference' indicates that these emotions are not being deliberately evoked by the therapist but arise unbidden from the client. According to Ridley, cultural

transference behaviour identified by the counsellor in the counselling relationship can indicate the way in which the client behaves in inter-racial situations (p.187). This proposition has its roots in psychodynamic theory, which explores transference issues and also places the power to name and diagnose the incidence of cultural transference in the domain of the therapist.

The experiences of Black counsellors

Lago and Thompson (2002) suggest that when working with black clients it is probable that the Black counsellor's task

> '...is beset with professional demands that would appear to exceed those of white practitioners. Blending British training with alternative traditional approaches and then having to cope with external consequences as well as the client's internal world are formidable extra dimensions to the black counsellor's load.'
>
> (p. 10)

Moodley and Dhingra (1998) found that Black counsellors did not necessarily see themselves as suited to working with clients from their own background. They suggest that the counsellors probably would not have elected to study on a course specialising in multicultural counselling for fear of being marginalised in terms of future employment. Indeed as Ridley (1995), Carter (1995) and others remark, the majority of black counsellors have received traditional training and therefore are more knowledgeable about how to counsel white people.

From their research, Moodley and Dhingra (1998) also noted that the black counsellors they surveyed had all prepared themselves, via self-study or through access to short courses, to include relevant issues of 'race' and culture in their work with clients. Further research could discover if the same could be said of white counsellors. Banks' (1999) research indicates that this is so.

Yazar (1996) describes the experience of working as a lone community counsellor as similar to that of many minority ethnic counsellors. Coping with the internalised racism of clients, dealing with the challenge of working alone with specific cultural issues and receiving little support from colleagues who had an understanding the impact of 'race' and culture, are some of the aspects he had to contend with. Yazar (1996) mentions feeling isolated, overwhelmed, and worthless and confused, stating that some clients misunderstood the purpose of counselling and counselling methodology and language.

Okorocha (1997) summarises the outcomes of an exploration of international students' experiences of university counselling services in the United Kingdom. The findings of the study indicate that international students found the 'strict adherence' to the western approach to counselling limiting, that cultural differences led to a significant amount of misunderstanding and misinterpretation on the part of counsellor and client, and this often had an adverse effect on the counselling relationship.

Avril (1997) broaches the dilemmas facing the Black therapist who wants to remain part of the mainstream of counselling and has doubts about the dominance of counselling theory that does not reflect cultural diversity and cross-cultural relationships. This experience is partially echoed by Kamer Shoaib (Shoaib and Peel 2003), who, in introducing herself as 'an Asian Woman first and a professional second', described the sense of isolation she felt in compiling her report on the counselling needs of Kashmiri women. Shoaib struggled to educate her white academic colleagues on the relevance of 'issues of difference' and sought solace in her networks with Asian academics who had similar experiences and understood her struggles.

R. Malik (1998) also refers to inadequate counselling training for working across cultures. She is critical of the European and scientific bias in counselling, favouring a more holistic approach and drawing on ancient healing system that incorporates shamanic traditions. Godfrey (1999) describes some of the challenges and benefits of working cross-culturally, recognising the gaps in her training and the need for further training and understanding about cross-cultural issues.

Taylor-Muhammad's (2001) vivid description of her training journey and difficulties in training is similar to the experiences related in the research interviews of other Black counsellors in Britain. Taylor-Muhammad recalls her struggle to be true to herself and acknowledge her cultural heritage and learned how to be Black and make it through the structures of the system. The decision to 'play the game according to the rules' in order to survive the course echoes the philosophy of most of the counsellors interviewed for this research. Taylor-Muhammad explains her decision to establish a training course for Black counsellors and points to a shift in thinking amongst some Black counsellors who are seeking further professional development.

Black client-black counsellor dyad

The black client, black counsellor dyad is said to be subject to a series of factors (see Appendix 4) which in combination could prove to be unsatisfactory for both client and counsellor. For example, if they are able to form a trusting relationship, client and counsellor could form an alliance in which there could be an emphasis on dealing with the experience of racism at the expense of other issues, or dealing with other issues ignoring the experience of racism.

In their research with black-white dyadic counselling relationships, Thompson and Jenal (1994) found that black clients had high expectations of their black counsellors, testing their black credibility, their qualifications, their understanding and knowledge about community, local and national 'race' related affairs. The researchers observed that these questions were not asked of white counsellors. This is akin to being assessed as not being 'black enough'. Housee (2001) refers to this in relation to students in higher education in the United Kingdom, who judged Black lecturers on being 'Black enough' by their dress, accent and political affinities. Dhillon and Ubhi (2003) report similar findings in their research with clients identifying as South Asian.

Tuckwell's (2001) research study (investigating four white and one Black counsellor working with a known black client) showed that in the black counsellor-black client dyad, client and counsellor experienced 'considerable discomfort and tension' and resistance. In an evaluation, the black counsellor speculated that this might be due to internalised oppression or the re-creation of past relationships. Tuckwell carefully identifies the dimension of being a white researcher in her discussion of the outcomes of the study. I share this concern as a Black researcher and speculate that there was also the dynamic of both counsellor and known trained 'client' wanting to align themselves with the researcher. How would Tuckwell have theorised different results which showed the black counsellor and black client to have had the most effective of the researched counselling relationships analysed? The possibility that both client and counsellor were experiencing internalised racism was not discussed in depth. Moodley (1998) refers to this phenomenon as the potential for 'mutual negativeness' in the black-black dyad, where client and counsellor are locked into each other's 'otherness', wounding rather than healing.

This was not my experience in the research process. In my interviews with black counsellors the consistent comments throughout were that the brief relationships formed were in many ways healing, cathartic and effective.

Black counsellor-white client

In theory, the counsellor, who has received a training influenced by North American and Eurocentric ideas, is well equipped to work with white people, (see Appendix 5). However, the counsellor's own negative experiences of racism and low self-esteem might be reflected in their work with the client. The client may be covertly or overtly racist in the relationship. There may be a denial of difference – 'the colour blind approach'.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with a brief discussion about qualitative research methodology and its appropriateness in this area of study. This is followed by commentary on the conceptual and philosophical frameworks that underpin this research and their influence on the research methods used and analysis of the data collected. The research methods used sought to fulfil the aims and objectives of the research through direct reference to the research questions as outlined earlier in Chapter 1. This research had two aims:

(i) To examine and document the views of black counsellors on their training experiences;

(ii) To investigate how issues relating to ethnicity, 'race' and culture are addressed by trainers and received by counselling trainees during training programmes;

These aims have been achieved by pursuing the following objectives:

(i) The collection and analysis of black counsellors' phenomenological accounts of their training experiences;

(ii) Investigating how issues relating to ethnicity, culture and diversity were included in training and received by black counsellor trainees;

(iii) Presenting a summary analysis of the literature on the construing of 'race', ethnicity and racial identity development in the counselling relationship; exploring how these and related matters are addressed in the training environment and might occur in counselling practice. This is preceded by a review of relevant historical, sociological and psychological factors that have an impact on black-white relations and consequently counselling relationships;

(iv) Conducting a brief review of counselling training provision, with a focus on relevant course delivery issues as they affect trainees and their subsequent practice as counsellors.

Descriptive details about data collection will also refer to a reflexive account of my role as researcher providing some indication of the complexities involved in analysing the data available.

Rationale for the use of qualitative research methodology

McLeod (2001b) offers a useful description of the nature of qualitative research:

> 'Qualitative research is a process of careful, rigorous inquiry into aspects of the social world. It produces formal statements or conceptual frameworks that provide new ways of understanding that world, and therefore comprises knowledge that is practically useful for those who work with issues around learning and adjustment to the pressures and demands of the social world.'
>
> (p. 3)

Qualitative research methodology investigates and attempts to arrive at an understanding of the quality of human actions and interactions. Research activity is conducted with the researcher as an 'outsider' - remaining distant from the research subject or subjects; or as an 'insider' - in which the researcher participates or engages with the research subject or subjects, usually via interview and or observation. Qualitative research has its focus on process, discovery and understanding, and is less concerned (as is the tendency with quantitative research) with confirming a hypothesis. The identified aims, objectives and questions strongly indicated that use of qualitative research methods would be most appropriate in this research.

It is no surprise then that qualitative research methodology is most commonly used in studies relating to counselling and psychotherapy. Its use is particularly relevant here because qualitative methodology allows for an examination of the black counsellors' perception of the quality of their training and training relationships, their subsequent work as practitioners, the interests and motives of the researcher, and the research interview relationship. The outcomes of these inquiries appear in this work (in Chapters 5 and 6) with the purpose of making a contribution to an understanding of black counsellors in training and in practice.

Central to the practitioner of the Person-centred approach to counselling and psychotherapy is the desire to enter into a helping relationship in which respect, honesty and empathy are the dominant features, which affect the overall quality of the environment and the relationship. Patton (1990) identifies the many similarities and few differences between humanistic psychology and qualitative inquiry. The differences are concerned with the length and purpose of the relationship and the level of intimacy between client and counsellor and researcher and participant. Like Wolter-Gustafson (1990), I have used my experience and training as a Person-centred practitioner as a foundation in this research. This means an acceptance that

knowledge is co-created and that I will be affected and influenced by the research participants and the research process.

Dimensions of the insider-outsider rôle of the researcher

As a main instrument of this research I acknowledge my 'insider' and 'outsider' rôle as a Black counsellor, trainer supervisor and researcher. To an extent, my qualified and trainer status places me 'outside' the experience of unqualified trainee counsellors. I am also 'inside' as a minority Black 'trainee, trainer and supervisor'. In some cases, Black peers may regard me as 'outside' of the black community, and at times I might be seen as being 'inside' the group of white senior counselling professionals. My 'outsider' rôle as researcher is reflected upon in analysis of the data (Chapter 6) and was continually challenged by the relationships I formed in the research process, as is the exploration and awareness of my own phenomenological experiences throughout.

In his support of giving voice to an often 'silenced' group, James (2001), a Black 'insider'-'outsider' teacher and researcher, argues that

> '...personal narratives of non-dominant social group members are often effective sources of counter-hegemonic insights because they expose the viewpoint embedded in dominant ideology as particularist rather than universal and because they reveal the reality of life that defies or contradicts the rules...'
> (p. 173)

Cognisant of the need to guard against the notion of shared assumptions about blackness on the part of the researcher and research participant, James notes how his position as black 'insider'-'outsider' encouraged the likelihood of trust and high levels of disclosure in Black research participants. In general terms, however, the 'outsider' researcher by virtue of their whiteness is, in most cases in England, outside the black community.

Researchers on issues of 'race' and culture who are white tend to refer to their position of 'privilege' and comment on the suspicions from white colleagues and Black research participants that their status and interest in 'race' issues arouses. Howarth (2002), a white researcher on 'race' issues, whilst accepting that distance and difference between the researcher and researched may lead to distrust and misunderstandings, challenges the validity of work produced by Black 'insider' researchers. This is exemplified by an account of her experience whilst undertaking

some research work with Black youths, in which her overtures were misunderstood and participants declared their suspicions of her motives forcefully.

Howarth's account suggests that she is unwilling to acknowledge her privileged position, and resorts to criticism of Black 'insider' researchers as a means of defence. Crozier (2003), another white researcher, investigating Black parents, describes her experience of similar displays of mistrust and rebuff from research participants when she tried to align herself with them as a parent with relevant disclosures. Hytten and Warren (2003) and Thompson (2003) assert that these defensive positions adopted by white researchers in their accounts of their work with Black participants result in a minimisation of the problems created by racism in favour of concentrating on the reflexive ('self-absorbed') impulses of the white researcher. This can lead the white researcher to insist on drawing parallels between Blacks and other oppressed minority groups (lesbian, gay, transgendered, those with disabilities), calling on their own experience as white people to discredit Black experience (Hytten and Warren 2003).

Bergerson (2003) outlines the criticisms and potential traps facing the white researcher exploring issue of 'race' in education, recognising that her task is to challenge the hegemony of white racism within research highlighting the ways in which the dominance of 'white guilt' deflects attention away from exploration of alternative epistemologies which are not necessarily grounded in 'the positivist or post-positivist paradigm', or favour 'colorblindness' *(sic)* as the way forward. This point is also made by Cole (2004) and others, but with a Marxist bias.

The influence of contemporary Black perspectives

In arriving at a conceptual framework for this research I have drawn upon three main sources: the work of black feminists such as hooks (1982) and Collins (1991), and, in particular, black British feminist perspectives as elucidated by Mirza (1997) and others; secondly, writings on contemporary Black philosophy and psychology relating to training and education as espoused by Gordon (1997), Fanon (1967), Carter (1995), Callender (1997), Moodley (2000b), Taylor-Muhammad (2001) and others; thirdly, the theory and practice associated with humanistic counselling and psychotherapy, in particular the Person-centred approach as developed by Carl Rogers (1957).

Black feminist writing, whilst accounting for the position of black women, also gives voice to a group until recently silenced within academic debate (Collins 1991;

Housee 2001; C. Jones 2001; Mirza 1997). As Collins puts it:

> 'Because elite white men and their representatives control structures of knowledge validation, white male interests pervade the thematic content of traditional scholarship.'
> (p. 201)

It is argued here that Collins' contention could be used to refer to the majority white constituency and hegemony of counselling training its theorists and practitioners. Black feminist writing offers an alternative epistemology and a way of examining the black experience of counselling training in academic discourse.

This is not to suggest that Black women are a homogeneous group, a point fiercely disputed by many black feminists, but that there are clear similarities and links within the collective historical and present day lived experiences of marginalisation, colonisation and racism of Black women and those described in this research.

The self-reflexivity that characterises much of the work of black feminists is of importance, as it describes and critically evaluates their experiences in the political and social domains in which they exist.

As a Black woman I seek to 'embed' (Collins 1991) myself in the group which is also the subject of my research, recognising that this is a difficult boundary to straddle, one which is vulnerable to the criticism from the group forming the subject of this research, who may not accept me as Black or 'Black enough'. This is not an unusual experience for the Black researcher, who is often seen to be, and is, in a position of 'privilege' in relation to Black research participants. Henry (2003) explores this phenomenon in depth, examining the dimensions and complexities of the debated and questioned (by research participants) ethnic identity of the researcher claiming some 'insider status' as a South Asian as the product of biracial diasporic South Asian parents with Canadian citizenship. This is similar to Ang-Lygate's (1997) claim of insider status for the purposes of research.

Self-reflexivity was an important element of this research as a means of identifying researcher bias, and researcher ideology (Reinharz 1992; Cotterill 1992). This interview method of research mirrored the environment of the therapeutic relationship, which is in part at the basis of this inquiry into training, and to some extent, forms a part of the research method used through interviews.

As Mirza (1997) explains:

> '...in exposing our personal pain and pleasures, Black British feminists reveal other ways of knowing that challenge the normative discourse. Black British women, from multiple positions of difference, reveal the distorted ways in which the dominant groups construct their assumptions. As black women we see from the sidelines, from our space of unlocation, the unfolding project of domination.'
>
> (p. 5)

Black people's determination to survive despite continued stigmatisation and oppression is admired and questioned by Black philosophers such as Gordon (1997), who questions this stoicism and determination asking: 'Why go on?' Gordon (1997), Fanon (1967), and others suggest that Black philosophy tries to answer this question through various explorations of the ways in which black people have sought to justify and make sense of their existence when so much has been done in the past to diminish deny or erase it. This will to survive was a common theme in the research findings. There are strong indicators that internalised oppression/racism is one survival strategy used by black peoples.

In 'Black Skin, White Masks', Fanon (1967) advances a hypothesis (specifically applied to his Antillean heritage) supported with practical examples, of the ways in which Blacks have in part been instrumental in their own oppression by accepting the superiority of white people (p. 228), through internalised oppression. Fanon also suggests that in their efforts to escape the oppressive nature of racism, Blacks have made themselves 'abnormal' in order to show Whites the folly and tragedy of their oppression and expose the delusion of their superiority by Blacks exercising control (p. 225). According to Fanon, 'White civilisation and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro' (p. 14). This contentious and convoluted assertion by Fanon tries to account for the ways in which Blacks exert their power in response to racism, and how it in turn damages them. In Fanon's view, Black identity is a white construction arising out of, or in response to, white racism. Fanon does not claim that his views can be universally applied to all Blacks in their relationships with whites. However, a significant amount of his observations and analyses have been influential, informing contemporary analysis of black-white relations and Black psychology, and Black philosophy in general.

The existential question: 'Why go on?' is relevant to this research as it challenges the very notion of the inquiry. Is the Black counsellors' training and learning experience important and worthy of documentation, and if so why? Is this research fulfilling an imperative to justify Black existence?

The work of Black psychology and, more specifically, the Afrocentric perspective, rejects dismissive Eurocentric psychological perspectives that negate forms of healing, alternative world views, forms of spirituality, and diagnose resistance to oppression as 'madness'. Black psychology also acknowledges the legacy and possible impact of oppression on individuals and their relationships. Recognition of this dimension in work with black clients is often missing from the training of counsellors and psychotherapists of any orientation, and is not yet fully integrated into the theoretical writings within the humanistic counselling and psychotherapy tradition. This absence clearly has important implications for the trainee counsellor, and for the Black counsellor in particular, and is referred to in the analysis of the data from this research. My view about the necessity of the inclusion of training on 'race', culture and ethnicity as an integral part of counsellor training does affect my relationship with those involved in the research. It was my intention nevertheless to rely on the evidence of the interview data to support or challenge my views on counsellor training and Black counsellor trainees' experience.

Grounded Theory

A basic premise of Grounded theory is that theory building is an 'inductive' process. Rather than arriving at a hypothesis prior to the research investigation, grounded theorists are involved in 'discovering theory from data systematically obtained and analyzed in social research' (Glaser and Strauss 1968 p. 1). It is a non-linear and iterative process (Pidgeon and Henwood 1997a), in which data analysis and collection can, at times, occur together.

Data and the coding of sets of data are constantly compared (referred to as comparative analysis), looking for similarities and differences. It is also accepted that the conceptual category or property (p. 23) assigned to data by a researcher is a key element in tracing theory development and understanding. Therefore different theories can be generated from the same data simultaneously and will be coded differently in terms of the conceptual categories used.

Glaser and Strauss (1968) note that Grounded theorists are as interested in things that fit and do not fit with the theory being built. The researcher is thus engaged in

constant comparison between the data and the evidence in front of them. 'Theory as process' - 'an ever developing entity' - is central to this approach and reflects the realities of social change and changing relationships (p. 32). This is in some way connected to ideas about scientific revolutions explored by Thomas Kuhn (1962), who reminds us of the provisional nature of belief systems. Scientists basing or modelling their work and problem solving on previous inquiry did not necessarily bring about change, but their ideas were exposed as fallible in the light of discoveries which perhaps veered away from a shared belief system. Therefore, 'knowledge' must be open to critical scrutiny.

This phenomenological 'discovery' approach is in direct contrast to the logically deduced theory from *a priori* assumptions often associated with quantitative research methods which usually begin with some kind of hypothesis to be confirmed or denied by the research inquiry. There are some reservations about the wholesale acceptance of grounded theory methodology, one of which concerns the use of the hermeneutic method in research which attempts to interpret and understand text.

A further criticism of Grounded theory as a research method is that its use of observations, anecdotal data, and reported experiences from unstructured interviews do not meet some of the more objective tests of validity and reliability such as triangulation, testing for generalisability of results, and some counting and checking as advocated by Silverman (1993). It is difficult to see how this research could have been conducted as effectively through other methods without affecting the content of the interviewees' responses.

McLeod (2001b) uses the term 'methodical hermeneutic phenomenology' to describe the active use of Grounded theory research strategy. In this way the Grounded theorist makes use of hermeneutics but places emphasis on interpretation of textual and other coded evidence obtained from the data, paying less attention to the notion of historical and cultural contexts that exist for the research and the researcher. In this research I acknowledge the importance of hermeneutics in the analysis of the research data and discussion of the findings, whilst not denying the historical and cultural contexts of researcher and researched. The importance of counsellor trainee Black empiricist epistemology, that is, knowledge achieved experientially, can be seen as an important contribution which hopefully does not deny the heterogeneity of black experiences.

Other research method influences

In this research I have also been influenced by the heuristic research methods described by Moustakas (1981, 1990) which amplify the significance of reflexivity, the total 'immersion' of the researcher in the theme at the start of the research process and the co-researcher rôle of research participants at each stage of the research process. Moustakas' views on interviewing mirrors my alignment with the Person-centred approach, creating a conducive and adaptive environment for the research participant. In their definition and descriptions of autoethnography, Ellis and Bochner (2003) have challenged my ideas about the boundary between researcher and the research data, in particular the relevance and objective accuracy of the researcher's personal experience as opposed to the researcher's story.

Whilst not claiming to be a methodological 'bricoleur' (possessing multiple research competencies) as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003). I have used a range of qualitative research strategies in combination in the research process, and drawn on influences previously described to theorize on the training experiences of Black counsellors. I concur with Denzin and Lincoln's view that as 'interpretative *(sic)* bricoleur' the 'interactive nature of this research process' is for the most part, shaped by the 'personal history, biography, gender, social class, 'race' and ethnicity' of the researcher and those participating in the research (p. 9). Denzin and Lincoln describe the product of the interpretative 'bricoleur' as resembling a montage or quilt of interconnected images and representations. The following description of the research procedure explains how the data was assembled for analysis.

Moustakas' description (1990) of the starting point for heuristic inquiry echoes my own:

> 'All heuristic inquiry begins with the internal search to discover, with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, a devotion and commitment to pursue a question that is strongly connected to one's own identity and selfhood.'
>
> (p. 175)

I questioned whether my experiences during training relating to 'race' and cultural issues were unique. Had I misconstrued some of the interpersonal dynamics that I became aware of? I wondered about the training experience and what it offered me on a personal and professional level.

Acknowledging the work of Knowles and others, James (2001) is reminded that teachers' biographies influence their orientation and what they do in the classroom. With reference to the research findings of Henry analysing the experiences of black women teachers, James notes that their decision to become 'activists' was based on their experience of racism and discrimination and the desire to do something about this to improve the educational experiences of future black students. James' observations reflected my experience and explain my active interest in this research area.

The aforementioned issues and questions challenged me as a trainer. What might improve training effectiveness for all trainees, and what were the particular needs of Black counselling trainees? What part was I playing in perpetuating training which denied the importance of the impact of culture and ethnicity in counselling relationships? What learning might emerge from surveying the training experiences of Black counsellors for future developments in training?

Using the early stages of Grounded theory as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1968), I identified a 'broad, open-ended and action-oriented' (McLeod 2001b) research question: What is the training experience of the Black counsellor? Initial investigations involved brief informal discussions with peer Black counsellors whom I met at conferences and other counsellor gatherings such as training events. I concluded that documenting the training experiences of Black counsellors could inform future development about counselling training experiences in general and in relation to addressing issues of 'race' and culture from the viewpoint of minority ethnic clients.

To capture these experiences accurately and in some depth, it was decided to conduct interviews with individual Black counsellors. Throughout this work, the terms 'research participant' and 'interviewee' are used to describe Black counsellors. Their recounted experiences are used as data. They are referred to as 'participants' because they agreed to take part in the research and 'interviewees' to indicate that they have been involved in an interview which is open to my interpretation as interviewer and subject to an extent to my biases (Hammersley 1992; Silverman 1993).

As is the case with any researcher who inquires into the practice of their own profession there is a need to straddle between the experience of being the 'insider' and the 'outsider.' What does it mean to me as a Black trainer? An attempt was

made to answer these questions through analysis of the research data and my reflexive analysis of the research process in Chapter 6.

Use of interview as a research strategy

A face to face interview strategy was used because it was close to the methodology employed by counsellors in their everyday work and would therefore be a familiar environment, albeit that they were in the position of interviewee rather than interviewer. In their practice, counsellors are engaged in encounters in which verbal self-expression is valued and supported as a means of personal development. The following observation by Wengraf (2001) supports this strategy when he states that

> 'People who have had a lot of positive experiences of 'deep friendly talk' will be better placed to participate in depth interviews than those who have none.'
>
> (p. 18)

Interviewing is often referred to as an epistemological activity in which the interviewer and interviewee co-construct knowledge and meaning (McNamee and Gergen 1992; Holliday 2002). The 'meaning' constructed in a research interview is subject to the social and historical contexts of those participating (Wengraf 2001; Hammersley 1992) and the continuous shift and balance of power and motivation between the interviewer and interviewee. Silverman (1993) suggests that we all might live in an 'interview society' (p. 19) in which there is increased interest in the interview as a way of knowing about celebrities and others who make an impact on our lives. Interview results can make a claim to offer clues to the person in a way that biographical profiles might not. There is a presumption here of the skills and perspicacity of the interviewer and their ability to leave enough space for the interviewee to speak freely.

Fontana and Frey (1998) maintain that:

> '... interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings.'
>
> (p. 47)

In common with feminist approaches to research, reflexivity was to be an important part of the research process. To enable effective critical self-reflection of my rôle and contribution to the research required that I have direct contact with the interviewees securing a tape recording of the interview for further detailed analysis.

Using interviews as a data-gathering instrument required my use of basic counselling skills. This involved establishing a relationship with the interviewee, building rapport and trust and attending to non-verbal signals, and for me as researcher to be visible and responsive as a listener, using active listening skills familiar to counselling practitioners. This highlighted ethical concerns about the disclosures that might arise and my use of counselling methods in the interview process. There was always the possibility that interviewees might feel deceived or exploited by the process.

It was my understanding that almost all counsellors would have had some experience of making audio or video recordings of their counselling work during training and so might not find the presence of a tape recorder too intrusive.

I reasoned that an interview would provide an opportunity for research participants to expand on topics or aspects freely in a way that could not be achieved via paper methods of research such as use of a questionnaire. It was also a means by which the interviewee could 'voice' hitherto unspoken ideas and feelings and know that they would receive a response from another individual.

I decided that an entirely open-ended interview might be quite high risk and in danger of becoming a general conversation. This open-ended conversation might yield significant research data material about the black-black dyad and about counselling in general, but I wanted to ensure that I secured clear data about the training experiences of the Black counsellors interviewed and met the objectives outlined earlier.

A semi-structured interview was selected as the most effective method of gathering data. This type of interview would be interactionist in its perspective; that is, interviewer and interviewee become 'peers' in the research process (Silverman, 1993). The interview offered some space and flexibility for the interviewee to direct the content of the interview if they so wished, as well as focussing on the subject matter of training and training experiences.

This interview strategy allowed the research participants to describe their training experiences in more depth than through other more remote methods such as use of tests, scales or survey questionnaire, and could be adapted to meet the needs of interviewer and interviewee.

There were opportunities to explore particular aspects of their (researcher's and interviewer's) experience in depth, in a relatively safe environment with the possibility of a high level of self-disclosure.

As Stiles (1997) asserts:

> 'Participants' accounts are limited by their interviewers and the relationship - not only by the degree of rapport but also by the interviewer's conceptual tools and the common meanings that evolve in the interview.'

A set of questions for a semi-structured interview (see Appendix 6) was prepared, and two pilot interviews with two Black peer counsellors conducted successfully. The fact that all interviewees volunteered to participate in this research indicated some level of personal interest or curiosity and suggests some investment in the research purpose and subject matter, or a desire to tell their 'story'.

In each case, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage. I noted that in reflecting on her research Cotterill (1992) challenges the reality of the participant's freedom to withdraw from the research process once they have arranged a meeting.

The notion of reneging on an agreement is especially relevant to counsellors, who in their training are encouraged to give careful consideration to contract making and contract breaking in terms of their arrangements to meet with clients. These learnt principles are often transposed into other areas of their lives, and may have affected their agreement to participate in the research with a peer counsellor. However, I did not detect any reluctance on their part to begin or continue with the interview; on the contrary, most interviewees were expansive going beyond the time allotted for the interview, and it was usually me who was strict in observing time boundaries.

Ethical considerations

The Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research agreed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in 1992, and the 'Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy' published by BACP (2001), have been adhered to in the design, conduct and communication of this research.

Particular attention has been paid to maintaining the confidentiality of research participants, who have been anonymised by a two letter coding system throughout. I have observed the principles of fidelity, autonomy, and non-maleficence referred to in the BACP ethical framework as a guide in the process of this research.

For example, the principle of non-maleficence as understood by BACP states that the interviewee should not be harmed or changed for the worse by the experience.

Interviewees did not report that they had been harmed by the research interview. Some commented on its beneficial and cathartic effect. Some research participants stated that the interview led to a brief period of introspection during which they recalled some difficult incidents that occurred during their training, though these were not always associated with 'race' or the interview questions.

There were two occasions when I had to consider carefully my personal ethical responsibility as a practitioner because of incidents reported to me 'off the record'. These matters were discussed and resolved in a 'clinical' counselling supervision session. Cotterill (1992) warns about the danger of difficulties of disclosures for the purposes of research and the responsibility that the researcher must bear for inducing these disclosures. Personal and private disclosures made during interviews have been edited out, as they are not directly relevant to the research.

Sampling method

'Convenience' and 'purposive' sampling strategies were used based on a 'non probability' sample. These non probability sampling strategies were not intended to generate generalisable results but rather to focus on a specific group selected for a particular research purpose (Cohen, et al. 2000). My original intention was to collect interview data from 30-50 participants, a substantial, but not representative sample. The target sample size was based on previous qualitative studies of this kind which examined training or educational experiences.

Using the BACP membership figures as an example, I proposed to interview a sufficient number of Black counsellors to broadly reflect the age range, gender split, and length of experience diverse counselling orientations, range of ethnicity and places of work currently registered as organisational or individual members of the BACP. Currently, there is no ethnic monitoring of BACP members, and it was therefore difficult to aim for a representative sample of Black counsellors based on such figures.

For practical and economic reasons I decided to concentrate on recruiting research interviewees in England.

I aimed to use three sources of access to participants. These were:

(i) advertisements in counselling journals;

(ii) personal contacts, opportunism, 'snowballing' (Cohen, Manion and Morrrison 2000);

(iii) peer networks and promotion of research topic informally at counsellor gatherings.

Advertisements were placed in the British Association for Counselling Journal (BAC, now BACP) and a BAC divisional journal entitled 'Race and Cultural Education in Counselling' in May and July 1998 (see Appendix 7), inviting volunteer participants to make contact with a view to participating in the research.

I intended to invite Black counsellors I met in work and other semi-formal settings such as conferences and training events. I hoped that the subject of my research would be of interest to Black counsellors in general and would encourage others who heard about it to contact me through the 'snowball' effect.

Preliminary analysis of the data at the half-way stage indicated 'data saturation'. Glaser and Strauss (1968) refer to this as the point where no new insight is gained from the data collected. This became apparent after twenty interviews had been completed. The same or very similar responses to questions were being elicited from interviewees despite regional differences, age differences, pre- or post-qualification experience.

Further interviews were organised, with a view to ending this process when the data collected was not advancing or adding to the theory building and the sample was balanced in terms of gender.

From the outset I knew that this research study could not claim to be representative of the wider population of black counsellors for four main reasons. Firstly, the research method of taped interviews used dictated that size of the sample would be small. Defining an accurate profile of black counsellors in Britain in order to create a representative sample would be difficult. No national databank of counsellors and their profiles exists. Also, the nature of the work and working conditions of counsellors is diverse, including those in statutory, voluntary, independent practice and a range of public service industries.

Secondly, the research would involve interviews which were semi-structured and interactionist and therefore not following a strict protocol for each interview.

Thirdly, the researcher's own experience would be included in the study.

Fourthly, those agreeing to take part in the research were self-selected and identified as 'Black', and, as stated earlier in this work, might have their own personal agenda which could have distorted the findings.

I encountered some counsellors who identified as brown, as dual heritage, or indeed are opposed to such categorisation. When I mentioned my research interest to some counsellors, their responses indicated that this kind of labelling was irrelevant to them. I did not meet, nor was I approached by, any Black counsellors who identified as being part of two minority groups: for instance, black and lesbian or gay, or black and disabled, until the data collection process was complete.

Access to research participants

The response to the advertisements for research participants placed in the BACP journal was disappointing, yielding four volunteers who were subsequently interviewed (Appendix 7). I under estimated the difficulties I would have in contacting Black counsellors in employment and other institutional settings. Finding Black counsellors at all proved to be problematic, especially identifying ones who met the research inclusion criteria of having undertaken training within a further or higher education institution.

During the research period I encountered Black counsellors who were working in a voluntary capacity in organisations specifically catering for black clients, and in some cases offering African-centred counselling and other culture-specific counselling approaches devised within the organisation. These counsellors had extensive experience of working with clients over a number of years and who had accessed their counselling training as part of an in-service training programme, and therefore did not fit the initial criteria for inclusion in the research of receiving counselling training within a further or higher education establishment.

From informal discussion held later in the research period it emerged that some Black counsellors did not have access to the publications I used to promote the research and advertise for participants. This exposed my naïve assumption that all Black counsellors would read or know of these journals and would be sufficiently interested in my research to respond. A few participants did admit to seeing the invitation by advertisement and had viewed it with suspicion, yet had responded positively to the personal requests through the 'snowballing' and 'purposive' sampling methods (Cohen et al 2000). Other reasons given for not making contact with the researcher were: anticipated time constraints; there was no personal advantage to participation in the research; and insufficient clarity in the advertisements about the purpose of the research.

In addition to 'convenience' and 'snowballing' sampling methods, I used 'purposive sampling' (Cohen et al 2000) to ensure the inclusion of Black male counsellors and practitioners who had studied in higher education institutions.

The research percentage ratio of 75% female to 25% male quoted in this work can be seen as a fair comparison with the BACP national membership figures mentioned in Chapter 2.

Data collection period

Forty-six Black counsellors were interviewed during the five-year data collection period. Two interviews were not used as the taped material was completely inaudible.

Forty-four of the interview records have been used in the research. The data set comprises thirty-three women and eleven men (Appendix 9b).

The research process and data collection was suspended three times during the period 1998-2001, and again in 2003, for between four to six months each time, for personal, work-related or health reasons. Data collection during the period of 1998-2001 was sporadic and sparse. Twenty-nine out of forty-four sixty to ninety minute long interviews (66%) were collected during 2001 and 2003.

During 1999 and 2000, I extended the field of my inquiry to direct personal contact with likely participants in the region ('opportunism') through conferences and training meetings attended. This yielded a further eleven interviews.

Using the 'snowballing' method, as described by Burgess (1984) and Cohen et al. (2000), research participants were encouraged to invite others who might be willing to participate in the research. The remaining interviews were obtained through peer networks (clinical supervision group members, and other work contacts), and individuals supportive of the purposes of my research, who promoted the work in their workplace and in a range of counselling settings.

Region covered by research

Interviews were conducted with counsellors working in the cities of London, Leicester, Nottingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and with counsellors working in the counties of Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cambridgeshire, Lancashire, West Midlands and Yorkshire (see Appendix 9a).

The research interviews

Interviewees were advised in advance of the estimated duration of the interview and that it would be tape-recorded with their consent. Interviewees were given a copy of the interview schedule and questions for reference purposes at the start of the interview.

Participants were informed that they could have a transcript of the interview or an audio copy of the interview sent to them within twelve weeks of the interview on request. Three participants asked for an audio copy of the interview. None of these asked for amendments or requested that I make any additions.

The interview schedule (Appendix 6) began with introductory information about the purpose of the research, information about confidentiality and anonymity for the interviewee, how material from the interview would be used, and confirmed the interviewee's willingness to proceed. This part of the schedule formed a 'script' read out to each interviewee.

The interview began with general 'ice-breaker' type questions, moving through to questions that focussed on specifics of training and practitioner experiences. Most of the questions included in the schedule were 'open' questions, inviting the interviewee to be expansive in their responses.

Questions 1 to 4 are general, attempting to elicit information about the interviewee's background and reasons for pursuing counselling training. Questions 5 to 9 invite discussion about the training experience without being specific about the implications of issues of 'race' and culture.

Questions 9 to 22 use the words 'black', 'white', 'culture', "race" and refer to the professional affiliations and needs of the interviewee. Questions 21 and 22 are supplementary questions. Question 17: Do you see yourself to be Black counsellor first? was included because I wanted to identify the 'agenda' of the interviewee in terms of their Black (racial) identity. This question was considered to be problematic and ambiguous by a previous white academic supervisor who reviewed the questions. My argument for retaining the question was not easily won because, I suspect, I was arguing from an emotional 'insider' perspective (empiricist epistemology) and not using objective rational argument in their view.

Interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the interviewee; quite often this was their place of work. This usually required negotiation with counselling service managers for a private room in which to conduct the interview.

The length of the interviews varied from forty to seventy-five minutes. In three cases, the interviews were shortened because of the interviewee's work commitments, or they were called away from the interview to return later. This did not seem to have an adverse effect on data collection. The timing of the interview was dependent upon the availability of the research respondent.

Apart from one, all interviews involved face to face contact. Thirty of the interviews were in the participants' workplace, four were conducted in my place of work, three completed in a negotiated neutral setting, and one person was interviewed by telephone. Three interviews took place in interviewees' homes, one in a training setting, and two in a restaurant at the interviewees' request. On the latter occasions they were caring for a child (under five years of age) who was present during the interview.

Paired interviews

There were three paired interviews: QJ female and RI female; FU male and JQ female; NM male and OL female, conducted in 1999, 2002 and 2003 respectively. The paired interviews were done in this way at the suggestion of the participants involved. All six had trained at different institutions and in different years. An important by-product of this process was the opportunity to compare and share experiences and to validate the data collected as accurate. This also provided a further triangulation source confirming and supportive of the individual interview data collected.

Use of audio tape recording

Tape recording the interviews was decided upon as a way of providing an accurate record of events and the discussion. I intended to transcribe all the interview discussions and then analyse these. This method was not without its problems. Some interview material was indistinct and extremely difficult to transcribe. In four cases, I had to rely on memory and notes taken after each interview to support the research data. Only material which was transcribed has been quoted and included in this study.

Initial contact with research participants

I used public transport to travel to the interview locations on most occasions and was met by the interviewees at bus or train stations and then transported to the interview venue. In these circumstances, interviewees had an opportunity to 'check me out' and much of the ice-breaking introductory discussion took place in assorted car journeys

and walks to the venues. The interviewees mainly asked about my employment, ascertained my counselling credentials and established basic personal information and domestic arrangements.

My manner of dress – smart/casual - and general approach was fairly relaxed and friendly. I was keen to present myself as human, fallible and with few preconceptions about what a Black counsellor should be like. My assorted difficulties with the audio recording equipment underlined my fallibility.

Twenty-five of the forty-four interviews took place in a counselling room - more often than not the one used by the counsellor for their own practice. This context undoubtedly had some impact on the interview process and may have replicated aspects of the counselling relationship in some ways.

The recording equipment used was simple and my concern was that it be unobtrusive in the interview. The unobtrusiveness of the equipment, whilst deliberate, was also at times disadvantageous, having adverse effects on the quality of the tape-recording, making some recordings indistinct in places

In over half the cases, my initial contact with the interviewee was by telephone to arrange a meeting. On their first face to face contact with me for the interview, eight of the research participants expressed surprise and pleasure that I was Black. Ostensibly, this could have had a number of advantages helping to establish rapport with the interviewee. Given that the majority of interviewees were female and black, there was, superficially at least, some commonality from which the interviewer and interviewee might draw comfort. James (2001) notes how in his work, the apparent ethnic or racial commonality between researcher and interviewee enhanced the possibility of trust and rapport. However, Bakare-Yusuf (1997) warns that

> 'Over-emphasis on black commonalities, at least in the political and to some extent, cultural fields, neglects intra-racial differences which constitute the complex nature of post-colonial Black British experience.'
> (p.82)

This caution was continually present in my encounters with interviewees throughout the research period, and was alluded to on occasion by the interviewees who wanted to stress their individual experience.

Data collection method

Interviewees offered the information sought from the interview questions in idiosyncratic ways and in an order that suited the telling of their story. As each

interview progressed it was evident that the questions in the prepared schedule (Appendix 6), were to form a framework for discussion rather than being adhered to rigidly in numerical and phrase order, in order to allow space for the interviewee to direct the discussion.

By largely abandoning my earlier concerns in the planning of this research about the unfocussed conversations that might develop, the content of the interviews tended to be richer, and the research participants more candid and descriptive the less I intervened with questions from the schedule. This supports theoretical discussion relating to the development of an effective therapeutic counselling relationship (Rogers 1957) re-directing power away from the researcher to a mutual co-operative relationship between researcher and participant. The milieu of the therapeutic encounter, familiar to research participants as their mode of work, was being used effectively to elicit data.

Post interview field notes - research diary

A diary was kept throughout the data collection process and notes made after each interview. These notes were intended to record my impressions, feelings and thoughts about the interview and my relationship with the interviewee. It was to be a means of informing reflexive analysis of the research process and outcomes during the data collection period.

Transcribing interviews

As stated earlier, all of the interviews conducted were transcribed to allow for some transparency of data and rigour in analysis. Wengraf (2001) asserts that:

> 'Qualitative' research interviewing tends to under-theorize its data. It assumes too easily that an interview is an unproblematic window on psychological or social realities, and that the 'information' that the interviewee gives about themselves and their world can be simply extracted and quoted, as the word of an omniscient and disinterested witness might be accepted at face-value in a law court'.
>
> (p. 1)

However, Walford (2001) warns against making an assumption that the transcribed interview is a permanent record of the interviewee's view. He suggests that interviewee's responses are subject to a wide range of internal and external factors such as the weather, time of year and other events. In his view, transcripts do not accurately record speech and that what the researcher gains is a co-constructed interview which is limited by 'perception, memory, evasions, self-deception on the

part of both interviewer and interviewee' (p. 96). Holliday (2002) makes a similar point, arguing that interviewees respond to meet the expectations of the interviewer or to appear favourably when assessed (p. 4).

The counsellors interviewed were referred to by a two letter code not based on their initials. The coded reference seeks to respect their confidentiality and provides the anonymity promised by me at interview.

The punctuation of the transcript attempts to be faithful to the speech delivery of the participants and included pauses, repetitions, and minimal responses. Responses made by the interviewer and interviewee were numbered consecutively. The number in parentheses after an interviewee code identifies the location of response within the transcript of the interview. Appendix 9n provides a sample extract of one interview transcript.

Quoted extracts from the taped transcripts are included as they appeared in the typed version of the interview. Pauses are indicated by ellipses. Words in squared parentheses are my words, indicating a change included to respect confidentiality, or to provide an explanation of the context or content of the speaker's words. Reference to non-verbal behaviour has been excluded from the transcripts, although reference has been made to significant non-verbal behaviour on some occasions within the discussion and analysis of the research findings.

Preliminary analysis and some coding of data was planned to be made in note form following each interview, in an attempt to arrive at emerging categories or themes. This involved replaying and closer analysis of tape recordings. Further interrogation of the data was done through comparative analysis (Grounded theory), and discourse and content analysis of the interview transcripts.

Process of analysis

In keeping with the Grounded theory research methodology as espoused by Glaser and Strauss (1968), data collection and theory generation preceded review of the relevant literature, in order to allow categories and concepts to arise freely from initial analysis of the data.

I decided not to analyse the transcribed material in depth until all the data had been collected, as I believed that this might affect subsequent research interviews and the authenticity of the interviewer interviewee relationship. However, I did establish that 'data saturation' had occurred through recognition of repeated themes and answers to questions. This is contrary to one aspect of Grounded theory research methodology,

whereby data is analysed in depth as close to collection as possible in order to inform the researcher of further data collection requirements.

The selection and collection of further data for the sample was based on a desire to test the emerging patterns that I was becoming aware of. For example, two thirds of the way through the data collection period (2001) I had interviewed twenty-nine counsellors, twenty-four of whom were female. The target was for a research sample of forty to fifty interviews.

Meeting this target involved using counselling networks to make contact with potential male research participants, and this proved highly successful. Ironically, in the last stages of data collection nine female counsellors offered to participate in the research. The snowball effect was working: these offers were unsolicited directly by me but came in response from those who had heard of my research through community networks.

The temptation to continue to gather data was seductive. What if further interviews would reveal further insight and enhance the data sample? This was countered by the knowledge of 'data saturation', another of the Grounded theory principles. I knew that new insights were not being gained from further data collection.

Transcript analysis

The transcripts were read line by line and then coded based on four main lines of inquiry:

(i) the research questions referred to in the introductory chapter and the broad framework of questions used for the interviews;

(ii) the length of counselling experience of the interviewee;

(iii) pre or post qualification status and previous qualifications;

(iv) emerging themes and patterns arising from the data.

The post-interview notes and transcripts were read and further coding was done which investigated the working relationship between me and the interviewee. A modified version of the questions used in interpersonal process recall methods as developed by Kagan (1984) was used in this investigation. From this coding and re-reading of notes made I was able to discern emerging patterns and themes arising from the research process.

A computer-aided system for analysis was not used because of the idiosyncratic nature of the interviews. The questions and answers given in each interview were not in a uniform sequence.

My role as researcher and interviewer

In the early stages I realised that this research was about me and the experience of the interviewees. I found this to be so from the first interview. By conducting this research my sense of isolation as a Black counsellor decreased and my understanding about counselling training would increase.

The first interview in September 1998 confirmed this. The interview went well (although the quality of the recording was very poor), and the issues and points made by the counsellor interviewed recurred throughout the data collection period with subsequent interviews.

After each interview, I made notes, recording my impressions and thoughts. I re-read my notes when all of the data had been collected. From this first interview it was clear that I had several roles, some of which were self-assigned, others arising from the interview relationship. These were identified as follows:

<u>Self-assigned roles</u>

1. To be the interviewer, friendly, honest, pleasant and encouraging.
2. To be the time-keeper, checking on the time available and honouring this.
3. To be flexible in my approach.
4. To be investigative - to follow up points made by the interviewee. Challenging contradictions when noticed and appropriate.
5. To do more listening than talking.

<u>Other roles</u>

1. To network amongst Black counsellors.
2. To provide useful information and contacts.
3. To be supportive and collegial.
4. To raise awareness of the Black counsellors' training experience through completion of this research.

I was aware of the need to remain vigilant about my assumptions and understanding in order not to contaminate the experiences related to me by interviewees. Holliday (2002) advises that the researcher view familiar scenarios as 'strange, with layers of mystery which need always to be discovered' (p. 4). I favoured this approach and the

perspective advocated by Reinharz (1992) and Wengraf (2001) of 'knowledgeable stranger'.

I decided that throughout the research period and during the interviewing process it would be important to maintain a 'Not-knowing' approach (Anderson and Goolishian, 1992) whereby I was 'being informed' by the interviewee rather than relying on my prior experiences. This did not mean that I denied my prior training, experience and current position but that I presented myself as a curious enquirer.

However, as Wengraf (2001) reminds us, the interviewer and interviewee do not exist in a vacuum; nor does the researcher analysing the data. It would be necessary to give consideration to the hidden dimension that the respective pasts of the interviewer and interviewee play in the outcome of the interview and what might be their 'unavowed and unofficial goals' in the interview process.

My notes after the first interview include the following:

> 'This counsellor and lecturer works in comfortable surroundings. He appears to be on the margin/periphery, not being part of a social local group. His increased political awareness has come from his reading of Fanon and writing on the Black Bolsheviks? Seems quite preoccupied with Windrush. He has rejected Western orientation and approaches. What does this mean about his practices? He is the first Black BAC accredited counsellor I have met. What is it that drives someone to become a counsellor?'

My remaining notes identified all the strands or themes that were later explored in the sum of all the interviews. Some consideration was given to the ways in which the data collection process was not dominated by a need to prove my hypothesis and answer only the key research questions.

The memory of my experience of the interviews suggested that I did not intentionally lead the Black counsellors to my early conclusions of the major themes.

I took a sample of transcripts (one quarter of sample) and looked at my questions and responses, comparing the length of my responses (by word count and time) with the interviewees' to gauge whether I talked too much. Calculations revealed that in all of the cases I occupied no more than thirty per cent of the total talk time.

There was evidence that I sometimes used words that the interviewees then repeated in their own sentences, which could indicate that I led them. An example of this is:

VW: How long have you been doing this work?

IK: Four and a half years not very long

VW: Quite a long time

IK then went on to concur with my assessment that four and a half years was quite a long time with reference to her training and experiences.

My research diary notes also showed that I returned from interviews with ideas and teaching points for myself, books to read and references to follow up.

Reading the notes I realise that the essence and quality of the relationship is only partially captured in my notes and even less so in the transcripts which are not verbatim (recording every utterance made).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity within qualitative research methodology provides critical insight into the research process for the reader and researcher. Using the 'digging' metaphor (borrowed from Holliday 2002) to describe research, it is clear that digging disturbs the strata within the researcher and that which is being researched in the quest for knowledge and understanding. This image pursued further in terms of depth and dimensions of the digging, implement used, objects found in the process, different layers exposed, point of entry, digging cessation and so on, all could apply to the research process and to some extent a reflexive account of that process undergone.

As I have continued my work as counselling practitioner and trainer throughout the research process, it was clear that issues arising and theory generated from the research would have an impact on me personally and professionally, leading to challenges about my role and practice.

Schön's description of a reflective practitioner aptly describes my position.

> 'When someone reflects-in-action, [she] becomes a researcher in the practice context. [She] is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. [Her] inquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. [She] does not separate thinking from doing. Because [her] experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into [her] inquiry.'
> (1996: p. 68)

Moustakas' work (1981; 1990) on heuristic research has been influential in suggesting useful ways of developing, documenting and analysing my contribution and experience as researcher and counsellor. As previously stated, notes and impressions have been kept in a research diary throughout the data collection process, extracts of which appear in the research findings and analysis of the research discussed later in Chapters 5 and 6. Thus the effect of the interviews on my learning

and subsequent actions as researcher and counselling practitioner could be monitored. This was done in an attempt to establish a distinction between my frame of reference and that of the research participants. This method was, in part, influenced by the work of Schön (1996) and accepted practice amongst counselling practitioners. Glaze (2002), a nurse tutor conducting research into the knowledge held by nurses, describes a similar use of a research diary.

Moustakas (1990), drawing on Grounded theory research methods used by Glaser and Strauss (1968), identifies six non-linear phases of heuristic research: initial engagement, immersion (total involvement in all aspects of the research topic on an intellectual and sensory level), incubation (a period of theory building and distance from the research topic), illumination (arriving at a range of insights and promptings as a result of immersion and data analysis), explication (further theory building) and creative synthesis (dissemination of research results in the most appropriate form). He defines this method of research as involving 'self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery'. The phases accurately represent my research process; Moustakas' ideas have been incorporated into the inquiry methods used and the process notes recorded in diary or field notes form.

Whilst reflexivity of the type used in this research might have little defence against Marcus' accusation of being at times 'dead-end indulgence, narcissism, and solipsism' (see Holliday, 2002), it is a way of 'capitalizing on the presence of the researcher in a methodical and honest way (op. cit. p. 146).

Finlay (2002), whilst recognising the opportunity that reflexivity can offer, is sceptical about some of the rationales and motivating factors used by researchers. She states:

> 'Researchers have to negotiate the 'swamp' of interminable self-analysis and self-disclosure. On their journey, they can all too easily fall into the mire of the infinite regress of excessive self-analysis and deconstruction at the expense of focusing on the research participants and developing understanding.'
>
> (p. 212)

In anticipation of criticism, E. King (1997) and others advise that researchers declare their position in terms of history, values and assumptions and their connections with research participants. However, Finlay (2002) is suspicious of such openness, suggesting that declarations of this kind could be masking the 'partial and emergent'

nature of researchers' findings or forestalling accusations of researcher bias. By concentrating on the research questions raised and the outcomes of the data elicited by Grounded theory I intended to limit the tendencies described above.

The heuristic approach emphasises the need for the research participant to remain 'visible' in the examination of the data. This is particularly important given the black feminist perspectives referred to, and the need for participants to be seen as people rather than objects. It was also wholly appropriate given the multiple connections between the research topic and personal experience. In many ways this form of analysis is not dissimilar to Kagan's work (1984) on Interpersonal Process Recall, which suggests guidelines for a systematic analysis of interaction, with practitioner self-reflexivity in mind.

Reflexive practice and validity

J.A. Smith (1997) gives an account of reflexive practice that employs the method of using follow-up interviews during which aspects of ambiguity from the first interview are clarified by further questioning. This method, whilst satisfying in some ways, does not guarantee accuracy or probity in relation to the moment of the interview. This form of member checking for validity might corroborate or contradict data evidence and its interpretation. It does not take easily take into account disagreement or that individuals may have 'moved on' in their thinking since the first interview (McLeod, 2001b p. 187). This method of reflexive practice whilst establishing some validity was not practically possible in the scale of this research. Another possibility considered was to conduct follow-up interviews with a sample of the interviewees or collating results from a post-interview questionnaire. These ideas were considered, but not undertaken for practical and economic reasons. Discussion with Black and white peers about the preliminary findings and my findings at the point of full data analysis was helpful.

Triangulation

It is acknowledged that, where possible, triangulation is used to enhance the validity of qualitative and quantitative research data. Through the use of a combination of research methods in the study of the same phenomenon, triangulation seeks to identify bias and contradictions and corroborate research findings. This might include the use of multiple observers in data collection and employing more than one theory or method to collect and analyse data. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 8) describe triangulation as '...the display of multiple, refracted realities

simultaneously.' They claim that triangulation is an alternative to validation since the depiction of objective reality cannot be achieved. They advocate the use of multiple research methods, and in presenting these allowing for the audience or readers to interact with the data and form conclusions and a multitude of realities. Although he is supportive of the use of multiple research methods, Silverman (1993, p.157) is critical of the notion that the amassing of data from many sources without systematic application to theoretical perspectives is an effective method of triangulation.
In this thesis, multiple methods of data collection were used and discussed. Whilst this does not strictly represent triangulation as described above, it contributes to the richness and authenticity of the data collected. Four activities were pursued: reference to relevant literature; reference to my own experiences as trainee; counsellor; trainer and supervisor, reference to the research data, reference to research diary notes and the outcome of the paired interviews. Use was made of Glaser and Strauss' (1968) recommended validation strategy of 'constant comparison'; that is, anticipating and investigating through data collection other ways in which the data could be interpreted (McLeod 2001b). This was in part helped by the use of interpersonal process recall methods (Kagan 1984) to analyse interview data, (see p140).

Respondent validation

In the writing up process of this thesis, five research participants were invited to read a draft of the work, focussing on Chapters 5 and 6, which presented and analysed the research findings. For practical reasons, this process was not conducted in the systematic way usually associated with respondent validation but relied on the feedback from accessible, local and willing research participants. Three of the respondents were critical of my restraint, recommending a more forceful expression of censure of racism in the text in general, particularly with reference to cited experiences of racist behaviour on the part of trainers and trainees. Two respondents asserted that in their view, the cumulative damaging impact of racism on the Black counsellor was underplayed. Overall, the feedback received from all five respondents generally supported the accuracy and integrity of the work reported in the draft findings and analysis.

Summary

The research methodology outlined gives an overview of the strategies used to investigate the research topic by firstly, identifying the most appropriate method of

qualitative research and the reasons for its use and secondly, by giving a summary of some of the guiding conceptual frameworks integrated in the study and research methods. This chapter described the research methods, data collection, and analysis process, whilst exploring some of the complexities present in the use of interviews as a research method. The reflexivity of the researcher was an important element of the research and permeates the analysis of data and the discussion of findings in a disciplined way.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and highlights the themes and issues arising from the data collected. This is achieved by reference to the research questions identified in Chapter 1, and the presentation of a summary of the responses to the questions asked of participants in the data collection interview process (see Appendix 6). Analysis and discussion of the data collected is presented in Chapter 6.

Five aspects are discussed in presenting the findings. These are:

1. the Black counsellor participants in the study, information about their work and training background and current circumstances;
2. the research participants' views on their training experience;
3. the potential impact of the training experience on the work of the black counselling practitioner;
4. the impact of the research process and findings on the researcher;
5. the implications of the findings for the counsellor trainer and counselling training in general.

Related themes that emerged from the areas mentioned above (such as the black-white dyad) are discussed with reference to the research questions posed in Chapters 1 and 6 of this thesis.

Context of research findings

A factor borne in mind when considering and summarising these findings was that they do not represent 'universal' truths but are situational, based on the phenomenological experiences of the research participants. As Holliday (2002) asserts, qualitative research findings are 'approximations or interpretations of a temporal truth' which are affected by the ideological position of the researcher. The research participants were in the minority in terms of their place within counselling in England. This also applied to their defined ethnicity and identification as 'Black' as opposed to other signifiers or descriptors that could be used. Their experience of being in the minority affected how the research participants reflected on their 'lived experience' as trainees, trainers and counsellors. There was, and is, minimal opportunity to confer with others of similar ethnicity (or minority experience) about the situations that arose in training or subsequent professional

practice. The lack of opportunity to confer could mean that trainees dismissed significant events and experiences until they had a substantial body of evidence to support their perceptions or opinions. This was, after all, an originating factor in my pursuance of this research; I wanted to find out if my experience of counselling training was unusual.

As a trainer and trainee, I have encountered trainee and practising counsellors who constitute a minority because of their identified difference on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, age, class and/or education, for example, who have described to me (informally) similar experiences to those occurring in the narratives of the research participants. Many of these informal reports echoed some of the themes and issues explored in this thesis.

Bearing this in mind in terms of minority experience, these findings and later discussion focussed on black counsellors in particular indicates that the experience of Black counsellors in training and post-qualification is unique.

Outcomes of the research interview for participants

The majority of the participants commented that they had said things and explored experiences for the first time or in ways they had not done previously. For instance PK, DW, EV, and RB recognised how the interview process had encouraged them to reflect on their experiences as trainee counsellors, reminding them of formative events. The research interview evoked strong emotions in some participants, and this quite often led to periods of silence and unrecorded but significant changes in body language as the interview progressed. The experiences were often cathartic, as RI (113) shows:

> 'Talking about all of this [training] and what I and others in that group went through ...it feels awful really. I had almost forgotten what sacrifices I made so that I would get through it. I just kept telling myself forget the 'race' thing that will come later, put that on hold until you get your 'piece of paper'. I suppose what I am left with is.. . and then what do I do? Talking about it all now I think... and what have I done?'

The research participants - qualifications, employment and training background (See Appendices 9d-f & k).

At the time of interview, the forty-four research participants were between 30 and 54 years of age. All had counselling experience and had received a minimum of two years training.

Twenty-two of the interviewees had worked as counsellors for between three and five years, eight counsellors had under three years' counselling experience, and fourteen interviewees had more than five years' counselling experience. In addition to their pursuit of (or actual) counselling qualification, thirty-five of the research participants possessed other professional qualifications. Amongst these were seven nurses, five qualified youth and community workers, two college or university lecturers, two pastoral ministers, two teachers, seven social workers, one doctor of philosophy graduate in psychology, a psychologist, a performing arts worker, a medical worker, and five first and second degree graduates with qualifications in business, management personnel and languages and social science.

Eight counsellors were BACP accredited counsellors at the time of interview. Over half were eligible for individual BACP accreditation although few had applied. This is a common feature amongst counselling practitioners in general.

Three interviewees were working within a higher education university counselling service. Twenty-two interviewees worked in a voluntary counselling service funded by local government, or were involved in fund raising activities and other supportive funding agencies. Other interviewees had a portfolio of work combining their professional role within a statutory local government organisation with working in a voluntary capacity. For instance, two full-time social workers (LO, JQ) also worked voluntarily for a local counselling organisation. Three interviewees (CQ, AZ, and HS), though recently qualified, were not currently practising as counsellors but using their counselling skills within their work role. In each case this was because they had been unable to secure paid employment as counsellors and did not want to work as independent practitioners.

Twenty-four of the research participants had studied on courses that were BACP accredited; the remaining twenty studied on courses that were organisational members of BACP. At the time of interview, six of the participants were studying for a diploma qualification and were at various stages of their training, twenty-two had a diploma in a counselling qualification, and fourteen interviewees already had a counselling diploma qualification and were studying for a further post-graduate counselling and psychotherapy qualifications, focusing on their original or a new counselling or psychotherapy orientation.

The research participants comprised a group of academically well-qualified and professionally experienced adults who for various reasons had elected to become involved in counselling because it was related to their work or they had drifted into it. This phenomenon is not uncommon, mirroring the 'drift' that is described by white trainee counsellors who enter the counselling profession, many of whom have similar professional qualifications.

Also, in common with their white peers, some Black research participants talked of having a sense of mission about becoming involved in counselling due to a major life-event, change in their work circumstances and/or positive experience of counselling or psychotherapy.

Six of the participants had recently qualified (in the previous eighteen months). Six others were in advanced training and had therefore completed at least three years training prior to the interview. Of the participants who had five or more years of counselling experience, sixteen identified themselves as being in between training, having completed diploma training, and were now were pursuing further training in counselling or allied work. Five of the participants had more than ten years of experience as counsellors, although some of this experience was gained prior to formal training within an institution.

Main counselling or psychotherapy orientation practised (See Appendix 9j).

As indicated above, some counsellors had trained in more than one counselling orientation or were in the process of accessing training in a new orientation. At the time of interview, sixteen of the respondents were trainee or qualified Person-centred practitioners; eleven were psychodynamic counsellors, whilst fifteen participants identified as humanistic-integrative practitioners, two as psychoanalytic therapists, one as a Black therapy practitioner and one as a transactional analyst. In addition, four had previous training in gestalt therapy and three in psychodynamic counselling; four had worked for Relate (a couples counselling organisation) and three had existential counselling training.

Research participants -identified ethnicity (See Appendix 9g).

All interviewees identified themselves as Black and from the following ethnic and cultural groupings: thirteen South Asian, twenty-five African Caribbean, one African, one East Asian (Chinese, Malaysian), three Dual heritage (Mixed parentage, Caribbean, African, Tamil, Polish, English) and one Middle Eastern. Within these broad categories, six participants described their multiple Black identities as

including parental or grandparental ancestors who originated from South America, the South Pacific or Burma. None of the participants interviewed identified as lesbian or gay, nor did they mention having a disability.

The research participants' views on their training experience

The reasons given by the research participants for pursuing counselling training seemed to fit with the pattern of entry for counsellor trainees in general, although there were a significant number of Black counsellors who saw their training as a 'mission' or part of a career goal.

Some participants talked of 'drifting' into counselling, others reflected on particular life events; GM, for instance, a masters graduate with over five years experience working in education, for Relate (relationship counselling organisation), and as an independent practitioner, stated:

GM (10): Em...my husband and I went to Relate em… in '95 em… and it was that experience that made me want to pursue counselling.

Some referred to their 'drift' into counselling as a happy coincidence or the result of recommendation of a friend or colleague. AS, an Asian counsellor, describes her move into counselling training thus:

AS (14): I started off in mental health, I'm actually a qualified psychiatric nurse. Counselling - I stumbled into it; in fact I was dragged into it. A friend applied for me, thinking that… I needed a career change...I didn't know where to go and a friend thought - yes, counselling is definitely for this person, so she applied for me...I filled in the application forms…and hence five years later I ended up here.

DP, a Black male counsellor and qualified teacher, described entering counselling training as a career move. Other research participants referred to the connections between their work practice environment, for instance social work, and the growing need to enhance their counselling skills.

WW (16): It's really weird because sometimes I think I know why what led me into counselling and then other times it kind of changes - did I really come into counselling because of that or what?

Sometimes the move into counselling training was to enhance skills in their present occupation. As QC, an African-Caribbean male counsellor, recalls.

QC (10): I started training as a counsellor...this was to learn some counselling skills to work as a youth counsellor for one week a year...So I do my week of the year [and] while my skills are quite fresh...I sat a selection day at (a regional counselling centre) counselling centre and the rest is history really it just took off from there really.

As part of his reception work for an advice agency QC found that people were off-loading with him prior to being seen by an advisor:

QC (10): I know I am a good listener it's something I've always kind of done... but I wanted to do it properly.

This point was echoed by the majority of the research participants, who remarked that people found them accessible as listeners.

Some of the interviewees linked their decision to embark on counselling training to an initial growing interest, something arising out of their own experience of personal therapy or from other training experiences focussing on personal development. IK, an Asian female counsellor who had previously been a youth worker, described a particular training video in which she recognised the transformative potential of counselling and counselling skills.

IK (14): I was watching this video, the youth worker was in a park. I can't remember the video's name and she [the youth worker] was one of the women that was looking very sad...she actually talked to this person and I thought this is what I want to do...I think my inspiration was the actual young person who was black and I thought I can actually make a difference here and that's what it was like for me to get into counselling.

JJ (10): I've always been interested in counselling and I had therapy myself for six years and found it to be of great value. I feel I learned a lot in those six years. I wanted to help others experience that as well.

The desire to help others was a major motivating factor for the counsellors who took part in this research. Three research participants mentioned a specific mission to work with black clients from the outset. All interviewees talked about the potential benefits of counselling and how they might be able to use the skills of counselling to assist those experiencing difficulties. The research participants were not unfamiliar

with the requirements and structures present in the education and training environment. The frequent use of the words 'lonely' and 'isolated' to describe their feelings about their training appears in the transcripts

As experienced adult students, many of whom had more than one qualification, being in the minority as a Black student was a familiar situation, and yet the research findings show that for many students counselling training proved to be a major challenge, in which they experienced shock at the events that took place whilst in training. The findings indicate that the Black counsellors made assumptions about counselling based on their experience as clients or general knowledge which were not realised; this extended to their expectations of the training experience and may have been complicated by the counsellors' own racial identity development issues. Fourteen of the research participants declared that they had had a positive personal experience of counselling prior to their training. This may have led them to assume that counsellors are wholly benevolent and sensitive in their relationships with others. This optimistic and perhaps naïve assumption may have been transferred to beliefs about counselling trainees and, probably, the selection process for training. The research participants may have assumed that as counselling is about the development of self-understanding and relationships trainees would be open to exploring their identity, including their racial identity.

A further assumption (sometimes based on prospectus material), was that issues of race and culture would automatically feature in the training programme and be an integrated part of it. In 2002, the prospectuses for twenty-four out of thirty-seven BACP accredited courses offered in further or higher education institutions were reviewed by me for any reference to the inclusion of issues of cultural diversity in the teaching programme. Indicative words such as 'culture', ''race'', 'transcultural', 'multicultural', and 'diversity' were assumed to be reasonable signifiers to a prospective student that these issues would be explored in training. Half of the sample prospectuses specifically mentioned 'race', culture, or ethnicity.

Overall, the research participants' accounts and views of their training experiences were similar across age ranges, gender and generations of training. I hypothesised that counsellors who had completed their initial training in the mid-1990s, as I had, would describe a different experience from those who had recently qualified, but this was not so. Those attending post-qualifying training events did not report improved training experiences.

In one region (see Appendix 9a) I interviewed counsellors who had completed their training at the same institution with a five-year gap, and discovered that despite the first trainees' optimism and assumption that things had changed since their graduation, newer trainees from the same institution reported similar experiences relating to curriculum content, and treatment of Black counselling trainees in training groups by tutors and peers. This was the case for AS, JJ, LH, QC, WW, RB, GT, and KI.

Research participants agreed that although it was generally accepted that issues relating to oppression of minorities and anti-discriminatory practice should be included in the curriculum of counselling training programmes, the actual experience for the Black trainees remained the same. All respondents expressed dissatisfaction and disappointment about the way in which issues of 'race' and culture were addressed on their course.

All the research participants described how their experience of counselling training had enhanced their self understanding and self-esteem. Male participants in particular reported that they had become more assertive, politically aware and less willing to be compliant. Some of this understanding and development had taken place because of the challenging and unhelpful experiences they had endured during their training and studying. FN, BX, KP and NM (male counsellors) mentioned that they had become inspired to seek out Black literature and took a greater interest in their cultural history, reviewing cultural traditions.

Participants were unanimous in their belief that counselling training was a life-changing event, and they valued the opportunity, space and time to explore their 'internal world'. DP (32, 38) described the experience of training as providing him with 'an emotional framework' within which to view the world from then on; this included his experience of racism from the white peers and tutors on his course.

Research participants commented on how much they enjoyed the theoretical studies and practical skills training of their courses, finding these aspects very useful in their current work and stimulating the pursuit of further studies post qualification.

AS (68): My training has offered me theory, academia, how to write like a western student. This is not said in any way to be derogatory...English is my second language and I write like a foreigner and it shows on paper.

Three of the research participants maintained contact with their peers post qualification, but most made little reference to them in their interviews. When they did, it was to comment on what they perceived as the 'less good' aspects of the course.

As WW put it: 'It's the people and the dynamics of the group'.

She goes further:

WW (28): …I weather the storm and do the best I can in relation to people on a day to day basis. I live with racism and I accept that but it's not until you're kind of put in this space, call it a bubble, with a particular group of people, that you haven't got a choice about you have to listen to some of things that they say in respect of 'race' and culture, the lack of awareness is like hitting you in the face. It's one thing when you're out there you can walk away… but when you are actually in it, it feels really concentrated.

This finding, reflecting on being an outsider, seemed at odds with the recommended environment of counselling training, which places emphasis on relationship building through experiential work. It also points to the possibility that Black counsellors are likely to be further disadvantaged and isolated in their later employment. Often operating outside the statutory counselling community, Black counsellors have less chance to influence current debate in the counselling profession. The evidence of the working life of those in the data set reflects this to some extent.

A question of survival

Thirty-eight of the research participants referred to their 'struggle to survive' their counselling training and describe some of their experiences as 'painful' or 'very painful'. There seemed to be strong desire to complete the training and this is exemplified by the following quotes from respondents:

QC (22): …the course had gone from 48 to 24 and I was determined that even if King Kong taught the lesson I'm going to pursue it.

And later,

QC (24): …I thought well that course could have killed me off but it didn't.

.

AS (36): It's a gut instinct to survive. I've experienced any little bit of difference, it shakes people and I have a lot of differences…

Another Black counsellor, referring to the mishandling of input on issues of 'race' and culture, said:

IK (60): … I thought well I need the qualification, do I have a choice. ... I really need to survive and I have through that and I wasn't happy about it.

When pressed on the issue of the motivation to pursue training at all costs this reply from one Black female counsellor was not untypical in the research findings:

GM(63): …if I have to deny myself, how I feel and what I do and what I say for the next two years then I will do that because it won't be forever.

VW (64): That's a lot of denying.

GM (65): Mm.

I then went on to draw the analogy of the relationship between the white master/employer and the black slave. Whilst I was not directly relating this to 'Uncle Tom', there was the implication that biding one's time, adopting a mask, were seen as legitimate methods of survival.

Phrases like 'weathering the storm', 'fight for this, struggle for that', 'keeping my head down', 'watching for trouble', 'being alert or on guard', 'wearing a mask', were used frequently by the Black counsellors interviewed to describe their strategy for surviving their training courses. Over half of the research participants speculated aloud on their perceived loss and denial of aspects of their personal and cultural identity in their bid to attain their qualifications. Paradoxically, this experience also increased their insight into identity issues (important in counselling relationships), and in some ways nurtured their interest in pursuing this at a later date.

Black counsellors (AS, BR, CQ, EO, IK, KI, MG, RB, WW, DW, EV, LO, QC, QJ) also talked about the need to work harder than, or twice as hard as, their white counterparts in order to achieve the same result, and being fearful of the negative assessments of their tutors. This applied particularly to the subjective assessment of personal development and counselling skills, and less to their objectively assessed academic work. It is difficult to arrive at any conclusion about the veracity of their perceptions. However, the research findings consistently showed similar or the same responses across the field of enquiry.

The Black trainee in the minority - tokenistic visibility and invisibility

Despite the fact that being the only Black trainee (or part of a very small minority) on the course was familiar to them, this did affect the way that research participants viewed their experience. Their sense of isolation was often heightened in moments of crisis or confrontation in the training group. It also meant that few Black counsellors felt that they could properly 'be themselves' or expect support from their peers. In many cases they did not experience that this was considered to be worthy of note by the group.

LH, a Black female counsellor, accounts for her invisibility:

LH (32): It's never mentioned; it's like skated over. No-one ever talks about there being only one Black woman in the class. They prefer to talk about there being only one male, one white male, when we started off with four and we are now down to one. It feels easier for them to discuss that than saying there's only one black person in the class and what does that mean?

The research findings suggest that the responsibility for addressing issues of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship were often the province of the black counselling trainee. The research participants' irritation with this and their reluctance to do so was palpable during the interviews. KI, an experienced Black student counsellor with more than ten years' experience, reflected on this and how the 'burden' is easier when shared amongst a small group of Black students.

KI (22): It's harder work getting the issues taken seriously because its down to...it feels as though the pressure is on you as the one black person to represent all sorts of things or to raise all sorts of things whether you want to or not.

This high level of visibility for Black counsellors is in contrast to their reports of being rendered invisible at other times in their training, when their white peers refused to acknowledge their Blackness as a factor in the counselling relationship and, alongside this, their own whiteness.

A common way of dealing with this described by most of the respondents was to exploit the outsider position ascribed to them as they saw it by staying silent, separate, and often 'invisible', as shown by AS's strategy:

AS (26, 28, 30, 82, 86, 88): It's been hard, really really hard. It's been hard in a sense of a feeling of 'I can see you but you can't see me' amongst my western colleagues. I speak like a western colleague, I write like a western colleague, I can behave like one of them but deep down I'm not one of... It's like being a part and separate from a culture…it's been very hard emotionally, very isolating, very alone and it's harder when I'm the only non-white counsellor in the group. I think it's the struggle with not being accepted...I have to isolate myself because I know I will not be accepted as myself.

Over half the research participants in training expressed relief that they would not be clients of their peers, and had little confidence in their white peers' ability to counsel black clients effectively, having observed their attitude to cultural difference and racism in the training group. OL, QJ, KP, BX, AS, WW, CQ and YU stated openly that the confidence of their white peers in their ability to counsel all clients and Black clients in particular was misplaced.

Conversely, over half of the Black counsellors interviewed were perhaps quietly confident of their own ability to counsel white clients, and less sure about whether they were sufficiently equipped to counsel black clients.

Further training plans post qualification

When asked about the possibility of further training post qualification, many research participants described their hesitancy and in some cases reluctance to put themselves through the ordeal of being the only Black trainee on a counselling trainee course, especially one which had a high level of experiential or process work in the content. The BACP and UKCP demand that their accredited members provide annual evidence of continued professional development, which includes attendance on further training courses. The findings of this research show that over a third of the interviewees have embarked on further, post-qualification, training. One respondent, GM, declared that the prospect of attending a Black therapy course filled her with anxiety as it might 'screw her head up'. The implication was that her understanding of westernised Eurocentric training would be challenged, there would be a focus on her identity as a Black person, and that this would upset all of the work that she had done to fit into the current counselling framework. GM saw this as too big a challenge. Being on a course which was positive about Black perspectives on

therapy would take her 'where she could not be' if she were to remain part of the counselling establishment. As she put it:

GM (109): It is not going to put you in good stead to be hearing that side [black perspectives]... Because...it's already doing my head in now [experiencing racism] and I haven't even been on the course.

Interestingly, GM saw her long term future in working as a counsellor within in the Black community. But first, as she saw it, she needed to conform to the white counselling training standards in order to receive her 'pieces of paper' (qualifications) which would confirm her competence for potential black and white clients.
Similar points were made by other respondents within the research findings who expressed keenness to attain documentary evidence of their training (commonly referred to as 'pieces of paper') and thereby acquiring a right to practice as counsellors. Several of the research participants indicated that this evidence was superficial and declared their intention to do things differently post-qualification and whilst working within Black communities. Perhaps Black counsellors have their sights set on other goals when they begin their training. They are, therefore, willing to absorb and put to one side their negative experiences in favour of bringing about change in their communities.
Mirza (1997) argues that this apparent conformity, often criticised or queried by Black activists, masks the true purpose of black women's (and black men's?) struggle for inclusivity in white people's realms. Mirza contends that: 'Their desire for inclusion is strategic and subversive with the aim to bring about change' (p. 271). She suggests that it is too simplistic to view this urge for education (in this case a counselling qualification) as being about 'resistance through accommodation' (p. 270), achieving success against the odds, against the stereotype. In Mirza's analysis (1997), 'the irony is that black women [and men] are both succeeding and conforming in order to transform and change'. This view accords with Taylor-Muhammad's experience (2001); she expressed her determination to re-shape and revise her own training methods in the light of her negative training experiences in order to develop a different way of working with black clients.
This interpretation in many ways matches the research findings as expressed by the number of participants who saw their training journey into counselling as part of a long-term mission to improve their circumstances, challenging stereotyped images of

being strong, being oppressed, being failures, as well as being active change agents within their community, by working with the psychological belief systems that adversely affect Black people in the community at large for empowerment purposes.

Examples of related training experiences

The research findings indicate that most of the recently qualified Black counsellors had hoped at the start of their training that their peers and tutors on the course would be more enlightened about issues of 'race' and culture. In the majority of cases they were disappointed.

DW (23), exasperated by the ignorance of her peers and tutors, queried:

> '...it's almost as if local, national and international events have passed them [white peers] by... It's really hard to believe that I live in the same country or city as them. Where have they been? This city has a high minority ethnic population yet many course members said they had never spoken to a black person or seemed vague about equal ops [opportunities] and such like.'

Similar responses were made by two-thirds of the research participants, who were incredulous as to the ignorance of their peers and tutors.

KI described how she selected her counselling training course on the basis of a statement in its advertising prospectus that it addressed cultural issues, and reassurance of this in her interview for a place. However it was a 'let-down' in terms of addressing cultural issues.

KI (24): I was expecting them [the tutors] to be au fait with issues around...trans-cultural counselling, intercultural counselling. I was expecting them to have booklists of research and conceptual stuff of people who have been doing this kind of work.

For KI that reference to cultural and racial issues was only included in the course at her insistence and that of four other Black students. The presence of five Black students on a counselling course was particularly pleasing for her and her Black peers. It was also a rare occurrence: no other research participant reported Black trainees in significant numbers on their courses.

The research findings recorded a broad range of significant events (see Appendix 6, question 7) which to a large extent described the Black counsellors' experience of racism whilst in training. Few counsellors actually used the term racism in their

descriptions, preferring to describe a major event as an important moment that involved culture and race, one they had vivid memories of.

IK recalled how, whilst in training, the group were asked to take part in a visualisation exercise in which they, as white people, turned black overnight. The tutor had forgotten about the presence of IK. Another counsellor (WW:44) noted that when asked to think of words and phrases that begin with the word 'Black' her white peers generated a series of negative phrases not dissimilar to phrases mentioned in Appendix 1. When asked if she had anything to add, she took delight in saying 'Black power'.

QC was told by his tutor (a leading author on counselling), in the presence of his white peers, that his admission to the course was a form of 'affirmative action', and that his marked assignments were treated leniently because he was Black. In the research interview he described graphically the severe impact this had on his self-esteem and further work on the course, in terms of a vivid dream that he had at the time where he imagined himself being 'killed' by his tutor.

Twelve counsellors described in detail how activities and exercises presented by tutors were handled insensitively. The harsh learning and outcomes of these were at their expense as lone or minority Black students. Exercises involving inappropriate role play scenarios, small group discussion work analysing case study material, paired work with peers with insufficient sensitivity and awareness, tended to make the Black students doubly cautious about addressing issues of culture and 'race', or venturing to widen debates which might lead to 'scapegoating' of them and unwarranted generalisations from their white peers or tutors.

Other research participants (BR, EO, GM, Hl, IK, LH, OE, XV, YU, ZT, DW, GT, HS, LO, QJ) recalled that addressing the experience of racism in the training group, and other issues of 'race' and culture, often led to white trainees crying; thus the focus of attention then shifted from the black trainee experiencing racism to the guilt of white people. These accounts are supported by the observations and analysis of the literature, in particular the work by Lago and Thompson (2002), Parker and Schwartz (2002), and Smith and Tudor (2003). Black counsellors in this research frequently referred to their impatience with this defensive response from their peers and how it prevented further and deeper exploration or learning for them. Many hinted that this (crying and expression of guilt and shame) might have been a

deliberate distraction by white peers from attending to the reality of racism and oppression which implicated and exposed them.

Another issue that appeared frequently in the findings was the Black counsellors' observation and annoyance with the notion that their experience as a minority group member was to be equated to that of being gay or having a disability. Examples were given of the ways in which their peers and tutors sought to minimise their experience or to align themselves alongside Black counsellor trainees because of their experience of being in a minority. hooks (1982) refers to this strategy as 'assertion of common oppression' (p. 144). Research participants found this insulting and inappropriate. This scenario is in some ways reminiscent of the similar friction between black and white women at the height of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s, where parallel arguments and comparisons ensued. However, as stated earlier, the data sample did not contain Blacks who identified as gay or lesbian or disabled. This may have been because Black counsellors who also identified with other minority groups did not prioritise their ethnicity over their other identity/ies, viewing this or these as important as or more important than being black. Informal contact with black lesbian counsellors in a training setting after data collection indicated that they tended to prioritise their ethnicity over their sexual orientation in response to societal pressures and obligations. Often, this was how they were identified by others, who saw their colour first and not their sexual orientation.

Teaching aid, Ersatz Teacher and Racism Monitor

Thirty-five research participants complained about their tokenistic visibility: being used as a teaching aid and resource, or course tutor, in the training course. In their view, there was an expectation from white trainees and tutors that they would lead or facilitate seminars or discussions on issues of 'race' and culture. The crux of their argument was that they had come to learn and did not want to be seen as an embodiment or symbol of the 'race' and culture agenda. However, their presence or lack of acknowledgement as Black trainees often provided the catalyst for trainee group responses. Further to this, their everyday experience of being Black meant that they were hardened to the realism of racism and therefore did not need to cry about it, like their white peers. There was an assumption in their training groups that they would talk freely about their experience of racism or what it was like to be a black person, for the benefit of their peers, without prior warning or negotiation. The

counsellors interviewed also believed that there was an expectation that they would monitor racism in the classroom and alert the training group to relevant cultural issues throughout.

The research findings consistently showed the resentment felt by the Black counsellors for these prevailing attitudes, and their determination to conserve their energy* rather than have it dissipated into such activities by white peers who were exploiting the pain of their experiences and understanding.

Spirituality and religious faith

More than half of the respondents were, like LH, disappointed by the lack of reference to spirituality, community and acknowledgement of the impact of religious faith on the client-counsellor relationship. All or most of these matters featured quite strongly in the lives of the Black counsellors, and quite often in their work with clients interviewed, but were not mentioned in their training.

Training on issues of race and culture

The Black counsellors interviewed commented on the emotive effect of the tutors' announcement of 'a day on 'race'' or input on 'race' and culture. It was often met with foreboding by the trainees themselves - no less so for the Black trainees, who had a sense of déjà vu, anticipating that such input would present them with personal difficulties, including handling, facilitating and/or absorbing the heightened feelings that would emerge from the group. AS (128) noted that similar feelings were evoked in some trainees for other topics that addressed (their) minority issues, like sexual orientation, eating disorders and disability. The work of Davies and Neal (1997) and Corker (1994) reflect similar trainee minority experiences.

Research participants were convinced that these training events rarely changed things for white counselling trainees, and sometimes left them with a false impression that they had tackled the issues of 'race' and culture sufficiently. Black counsellors interviewed considered that the training in this area was limited and tended to be tagged on to courses at the end as a result of pressure from black students. Furthermore, there appeared to be an assumption that this limited training input was sufficient to equip counsellors to work effectively with black clients. No attempt was made, in their view, to monitor or assess competence, nor could it be, given that

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* I acknowledge the ideas of Paul Keenan expressed in discussion on exploring the dissipated energies of minority students continually implored to explain themselves to the majority.

the trainers and trainees were often inexperienced in this area. One research respondent (YU), on her complaint that issues of 'race' and culture had not been addressed, received this reply from her tutor: "Well, the only way it will be done is if you give a seminar presentation next week." This occurrence was related to me by a Black counsellor who graduated in 2002, who duly gave a seminar, the contents of which were severely criticised and resisted by her white peers and tutors. Other research participants (FN, HL, KI, MG, RB, GT, FU, OL, JQ) reported similar experiences.

Clearly, for the course organisers of some training programmes, 'race' and culture is just another topic to cover, rather than an important aspect of human relationships affecting all other areas of study and exploration.

All the research participants stated that they had not learnt anything from the 'race' and culture input provided as part of the course. One counsellor (WW, 56) commented 'It's a day for them (white people) really'. Some research participants wondered aloud whether issues of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship would be addressed at all if there were no black students in the training group.

For the Black counsellors interviewed, most of their learning about these issues had come from self-study, their personal experience, and indirectly from their observations and analysis of their peers and tutors whilst on the course.

The potential impact of the training experience on the work of the Black counselling practitioner

Analysis of the some of the research findings referred to above, whereby Black counsellors talked of feeling unsafe, besieged and fighting for their survival, might give the impression of a subdued set of Black professionals. This was not my experience of them in their place of work. Most of them appeared to be optimistic, confident, and enthusiastic individuals, some of whom had reached fairly prominent management positions in their place of work. It is possible that their training experiences had prepared them to mask their real selves for my benefit, but I doubt that this is the case. I concluded that the research participants had found ways of integrating and making use of the whole of their training experience in a powerful way which was helpful to them and to their clients.

One could argue that they had an excellent understanding of oppression, and therefore could empathise with their clients, black or white, effectively. However, the reverse could also be true, and that makes them less effective or even dangerous

in their work with black clients. The research evidence suggests that most of the Black counsellors interviewed had found ways of overcoming feeling isolated and unsafe through further work and reflection during and post qualification. This often took the form of seeking out other Black counsellors or mental health professionals for support, self-study, support from family and friends, and fairly rigorous monitoring of their practice with other Black peers.

Where this was not possible, Black counsellors talked about their frustration and sense of isolation and their determination to set up some type of appropriate 'critical friendship' network of support. This indicated that they were aware of the issues and the potential for their own internalised racism and how this might affect their counselling relationships with black and white clients.

Working with white clients - the Black-white dyad

The theoretical discussion on the potentials within dyadic relationship has been explored in Chapter 3 of this research, on racial identity development. The findings indicated a mixture of experiences reported by the research participants, most of whom did the majority of their work with white clients. As one Black counsellor ruefully explained:

IK (90): I've been trained to work with white people... I've made a real effort to integrate with white people...and I have been influenced by the western English culture.

Another counsellor stated:

GM (93): I have been brought up here in a white society and I know the culture and worked in the system...

LH described at length her early experience of working with a white male client who objected to her as a counsellor, but did not voice this.

LH (52): ...we never really got past the racism. Even though I saw him for over two years... He just wouldn't use my name, he didn't think it was important to use my name and my lack of experience I think I didn't challenge him. If I counselled him now, I think it would be a very different experience... It almost put me off counselling...he was rude, insulting at times... The racism... I wouldn't say we didn't address it, we spoke about it and he was derogatory and that stayed with me a lot.

For LH, the training and supervision she received did not help her to deal with the racism of her client or her own internalised racism during that relationship.

Subsequently she was able to reflect on that experience and alter her way of working quite considerably.

For many of the Black counsellors I interviewed, working with white clients exposed many of their own prejudices about white people. However, the counselling relationships they had with their clients encouraged them to review and discard their prejudices in the light of experience. The counsellors gave many examples of early terminations with white clients who did not want to work with a Black counsellor and made this clear at the first meeting or just did not return. This posed a challenge for the counsellors concerned, as many of them worked in establishments where they were the only Black counsellor or were in the minority. The response of their white peers to clients who terminated their counselling at an early stage when allocated a Black counsellor varied, from sympathetic to denial of racism. Neither of these responses seemed to help the research participant in effecting change.

These experiences were difficult to 'prove' and often led to the Black counsellor being placed even more on the margins within the organisation. Whilst this experience is not limited to the counselling profession, for the Black counsellors interviewed it was often humiliating and difficult to talk about with white colleagues. The findings suggest that the issues relating to the black-white dyad (referred to in Chapter 3) are relevant here. Also, that many of the dimensions and experiences are replicated, to some extent, in the Black counsellors experience of training and in their everyday lives.

Working with Black clients - the Black-Black dyad

The research participants were fully aware that not all Black counsellors had an innate capability to connect with their black clients. Research participants referred to counsellors they encountered as peers who were not able, in their view, to work with black clients effectively because of their internalised oppression or lack of knowledge. Apart from one Black counsellor, ZT, who had completed a separate two year diploma in Black therapy in addition to a counselling diploma training course, other counsellors had sought out additional short training modules or workshops on cross-cultural or transcultural counselling. Twenty-eight of the interviewees had relied on self-study, or used their training and some assumptions about commonality of experience as the basis for the relationships with black clients. Discussion of current theorists' work on the issues that might emerge from a Black-Black dyad did not appear in the research findings as being significant. Four of the

counsellors interviewed spoke of their understanding and use of the racial identity models developed by Helms (1995) and others in their work as practitioners. Forty-two of the research participants had, at some time, worked with black clients; however, the majority of their practice experience involved working with white clients. In some cases they gave descriptive accounts of the successful work they had done which featured work on identity development or the experience of racism. Two thirds of the research participants discussed the implications of the black-black dyad in counselling relationships, referring directly or indirectly to the ways in which their experiences of working with black clients had been affected. This finding suggests that some of the misgivings that theorists have about the disadvantages of the black-black dyad (collusion, over-identification, for instance) have been anticipated and addressed, at least to some extent, by the insightful analysis of the black counselling or supervisory practitioner.

Black counsellors talked positively about their work with black clients and commented on what they perceived to be the special understanding that occurs between two black people, implying that this superseded many of the potential difficulties emerging from theory. Their claim of an intuitive connection with black clients is difficult to prove, and yet this was a belief of more than half of the interviewees. Some of the participants' comments about working with black clients could attract the criticism that they are essentialist, and yet these statements consistently reflected the experience of Black counsellors participating in this research. Below is a set of comments describing work with black clients.

JJ (86): There are some things that only a black person can really understand.

KI (44): There are some things that can only be understood by a black counsellor.

EO (90): I think ideally if you had an available open black counsellor that would be the ideal, but in reality you need to have an available open counsellor. I have worked with counsellors who haven't been able to work with black issues...being able to talk about and work through stereotypes, being able to work with internalised racism as well.

Examples were also given where this special insight and understanding was not evident. EV talked about the tense relationship she had with her black trainee peers

and how she elected to work with a group of white peers rather than deal with the criticism of her black peers about her 'white attitudes'. In her view, she was seen as 'not Black enough'.

Black counsellors talked about the higher levels of self-disclosure that occurred when working with black clients. All of the research participants mentioned that the experience of racism and internalised oppression were factors in their work with black clients. The research participants also referred to the high levels of responsibility they felt when working with black clients. A desire to 'get it right', to 'not make things worse for their black clients', to live up to the expectations of the black client, was a feature of many of the points made by the black counsellors interviewed. Further evidence of these wishes has also been obtained informally by the researcher in her work as a trainer, from responses of Black trainees.

Ten Black counsellors had worked with either a black therapist or black supervisor whilst training or subsequently. Of the remaining majority, twenty-five expressed an interest in the possibility of working with a black therapist and/or supervisor. Whilst all respondents were convinced that the quality of the relationship in therapy or supervision was paramount irrespective of ethnicity match, the majority were intrigued by the possibility of working with an ethnically matched counsellor and/or supervisor.

When considering the prospect of receiving counselling or supervision from a Black practitioner, the Black counsellors interviewed talked about 'the relief of not having to explain', of being able to use cultural or linguistic shorthand, of feeling more relaxed and able to talk openly about their work and their feelings, of being 'challenged more' and also 'learning about being in relationship' and the dynamics of the black-black dyad in ways they did not experience in their counselling training.

All of these desires place similar pressures and expectations on the black therapist or supervisor working with Black counsellors or trainees, as this researcher can testify!

One research participant reported that her experience of working with a black supervisor was unsatisfactory, describing the supervisor as being 'all over the place' and not effective in her rôle. Another counsellor (QC) recalled that his initial sense of being fortunate enough to be allocated to a black supervisor in his placement turned to disappointment. His supervisor never mentioned issues of 'race' and culture in relation to his work with clients, deeming it irrelevant.

The majority of the Black counsellors had worked with white counsellors and supervisors in their training and post qualification. Many expressed their reluctance to do this but felt they had no choice due to the dearth of Black counsellors or supervisors in their area. A few Black counsellors expressed their dissatisfaction with their therapist and mentioned the marked reluctance on the therapists' part to discuss "race".

LH (88): …very unsatisfactory. But I am not saying that all white counsellors are like her...we couldn't make that connection. I felt that she didn't understand a lot of the things I was saying at all.

In their analyses of the potential characteristics of the Black-black dyad, Carter (1995), Ridley (1995), Rose (1997) and Lago and Thompson (2003) evaluated the quality of the Black-black dyad and raised points referred to in Appendices 3, 4 & 8 of this work. The points raised in these appendices did not appear in the research findings as issues for all of the Black counsellors but are nevertheless worth highlighting here, especially as it seems even more important for the counselling supervisor - Black or white - to be alert to the potential implications of the Black-Black dyad.

All of the research participants interviewed were of the opinion that black clients had specific needs, some of which indicated reflection on the implications for the black-black dyad. Forty counsellors referred to their belief that Black clients needed more reassurance and early acknowledgement of their difference, that their clients' self-image tended to be quite low and that they often feared that they would be labelled as 'mad' by the counsellor for expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings. This supports some of the research findings of the Joseph Rowntree report (2001), Dhillon and Ubhi (2003) and Alleyne (2004).

These research findings show that the needs of the Black counselling trainee were specific and in some cases special. Furthermore, that in almost all cases, these needs were not identified by the trainers/tutors and were invariably not addressed in any way.

It is also clear from the findings that the Black counsellor trainee has a learning agenda in relation to issues of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship, but at present, this does not appear to be articulated in any of the literature or current debate on training and counsellor development.

Some of this may be due to trainer ignorance in this field of work, but I suspect that a large part is about ignoring the issues, as they are too controversial or difficult to address. So, 'silent' Black counselling trainees may be disadvantaged in their training. However, this 'silencing' might be tacit response to the silence required of them by white trainers and trainees who do not regard these issues as an essential part of all counsellors' training.

Being Black and part of the diaspora

WW (160): Things that I choose to go off and do are not what Black people do… Painting, water colours on a Saturday morning, Tai Chi. I'm just out there doing and I get excited about things so I go off and do it. I don't have any expectations when I see a course I'm interested in, I just go for it.

This comment was made by a recently qualified Black counsellor as she expanded on what being Black meant to her and how much she resented being categorised or labelled by Black or white people. In particular that her blackness might be questioned because of her interest in things that may not be deemed to be part of Black culture.

The findings showed that counselling training and their pursuit of other qualifications prior to training had not only placed many of the interviewees in the 'middle class', but had also changed their views and encouraged them to venture out into what might be cautiously described as mainstream white activities. Research participants frequently referred to themselves as being seen as 'different' by members of the black community, not necessarily in a pejorative sense.

The Black research participants felt able and confident to straddle both cultures, and could be seen to represent what Courtland Lee (1997) and the Black Women's Sub-Committee (2002) refer to as part of the 'Black diaspora'. Rather than betraying or denying their cultural heritage, it is blended with their new subjective understanding of their identity as result of migration or scattering. Their visibility in traditionally white communities (professional, social and educational) challenges the status quo and makes them 'visible'.

DP (38): I don't see what I do as being particularly aggressive but then I accept that I am a Black man.

DP identified himself as being from a Black middle class background; his parents were seen as such when they lived in Jamaica. He was aware, however, that in his work as a counsellor he was challenging black male stereotyped images, whilst holding on to his identity and cultural heritage. This was a common view held by many of the research participants who did not want to lose their identity by being 'sucked into the mainstream' (IK, 61-64), a point made by the trainee of colour referred to by Alred (1999).

Black counsellors' sense of mission

The majority of black counsellors interviewed were sympathetic towards trainees who terminated their studies early, and most were able to articulate clearly why they were determined to pursue their training despite the obstacles. PK (28 &32) recalled:

> You have to put up with a lot of nonsense and ignorance from some of the white people on the course... There were times when I did not want to go back... but a part of me wanted to educate myself so I kept coming back and confronting issues.

It did not seem to be simple cussedness. For many, their determination to continue with their training sprang from past experiences of adversity in other training and their ultimate struggle for 'survival'. For the majority of the interviewees (over 35), their tenacity and resilience pointed to a sense of mission and responsibility to be a Black pioneer in the field of counselling. They were keen to set an example for other Black counselling hopefuls to encourage them to follow where they had already been. For two-thirds of the Black counsellors (all of the men) interviewed, being a rôle model was part of their continuing adult experience. It was also an act of defiance, to succeed against the odds. As DH (28) put it: 'I didn't want to be another statistic in a white book'.

The findings showed that the Black counsellors appreciated the value of counselling and wanted to promote counselling as a means by which other black people could benefit in the same way as many white people were.

This is important in the context of mental health referrals for black people within the statutory mental health system and psychiatry referred to in Chapter 1 (Braid 1999; Fernando 1991; Littlewood and Lipsedge 1989). In almost every case, the Black

research participant interviewed knew of at least one black person who had medically diagnosed mental health problems, and announced their suspicion that they did not have equal or appropriate access to 'talking therapies'. GM's (63 comment) 'There are a lot of wounded black people in the community' echoed the belief of most of the Black counsellors interviewed.

One Black counsellor (JJ) also indicated his willingness to take on the educative rôle for white people. He saw it as important:

JJ (61): ...to encourage others (whites) to see things from a Black perspective.

Expectations of Black female counsellors

Dumas (1985) describes the reality of the 'Black mammy syndrome' (see hooks 1982) facing many Black women professionals in leadership.

> 'the image of the strong, powerful, castrating Black matriarch pervades contemporary organizations. She is expected to comfort the weary and oppressed, intercede on behalf of those who feel abused, champion the cause for equality and justice - often as a lone crusader.' (p. 323-334)

Dumas notes that Black women who reject the socially constructed 'black mammy' or mother rôle are labelled as 'bad' Black mothers. This position is seen as intolerable to whites and blacks and punishable by being ostracised or excluded. Her research revealed that black women are often punished by black and white colleagues for perceived shortcomings connected to the 'black mammy' expectations of her staff. According to the research by Carlis Douglas (1998), the term black manager was often viewed as a contradiction by the manager's colleagues and junior staff. Douglas' research findings showed that Black women managers were treated differently from their white manager peers, often with suspicion, and tended to be marginalised by both black and white staff.

Like most black feminist scholars, hooks (1982), Dumas (1985), and Reynolds (1997) oppose the essentialist and unacceptable burden of the black female stereotype of 'superwoman' renowned for her strength and resilience. Reynolds observes that in Britain, Black women, who are mostly employed in the public sector and caring professions, are often featured as clusters at the bottom of their professional and career ladders (p. 108) and, through choices and assumed affinity, channelled into areas where there is a high proportion of black service users. Their

'success', often limited, is seen as natural, almost biological, and therefore those who are not a success are blameworthy. For example, it is black mothers rather than black fathers who are held responsible for their 'wayward sons'.

Although this analysis is usually applied to women of African Caribbean descent, Reynolds (1997) believes that in some instances Black academics are colluding with the stereotype, and women in education are viewing the images as self-fulfilling prophesies. This false construction of black women denies their contribution outside of the mothering rôle and limits their functioning, as does the emphasis on the experience of slavery as the defining experience of black peoples. hooks (1982) is critical of those who misinterpret Black women's endurance as strength and as evidence that they have overcome oppression. She forcefully argues that such a notion deflects attention and discussion away from important exploration and exposure of the sources and causes of oppression.

Much of this black feminist analysis could apply to the experience of the Black female counsellor. In a 'profession' which is predominantly female, the Black counsellor is in the invidious position of dealing with the high expectations of her clients because she is a counsellor and the high expectations of her clients and colleagues because she is Black. Douglas' (1998 research) found that Black women managers experienced these external pressures and expectations which led to internal conflicts resulting in work overload, exhaustion, numbing of emotions and alienation from the self. My research findings indicate that many Black female counsellors had a foretaste of this in their training and previous occupations, and continue to experience the aforementioned responses to some degree in their current posts. One Black counsellor described the expectations she faced in her training:

EO (58) I am quite outspoken, I don't think I'm aggressive, I address things at the time and I think I'm at conflict with people's expectations because I'm black and I'm a big woman. I think that's got something to do with it and people don't know where to put me…

and in a new post:

EO (103) I was the first black counsellor they'd had and one of things I had to do was develop a service for black clients because they didn't have one. With that comes quite a bit of conflict, sometimes it's there already but you're the 'different' person so quite often it gets directed at you. Sometimes it's painful but what I'm able to do quite quickly now is work out what's going on.

The impact of the research process and findings on the researcher

The research process began long before this thesis was proposed. Denzin (1989), King (1997), Holliday (2002) and others have concluded that qualitative research is really about the researcher, and becomes of value when it moves beyond the immediate situation of the researcher. As an 'insider' researcher, I was interviewing Black counsellors about their training and work experiences out of an interest developed from trying to analyse my own experience. The potential to merely seek confirmation of my own hypothesis about this unique experience was ever present. This factor may also have influenced those who responded to the invitation to take part in the research. It is possible that only those who had something controversial to say about their own experience agreed to participate. It is also possible that the respondents only told me what I wanted to hear, and from their biased perspective were presenting themselves and their experiences in the best light. As researcher, there is also the possibility that because the research findings echoed my own experience, this may have affected my judgement and ability to collect and analyse the data without significant bias. I recognised the importance of keeping my self-disclosures to a minimum until after the research interview had taken place. There were a few examples in the research findings where in describing their experience participants used a word or phrases I had used in an earlier part of the interview, for instance 'close down'.

Some respondents admitted that they had accepted the invitation to participate in the research out of curiosity. Others were unsure of my ethnicity prior to meeting me, and were then pleasantly surprised that I was Black. For instance, when invited to ask further questions or make final comments, JJ said;

JJ (88): It's funny because I don't know what I thought, but what is interesting is that I didn't expect you to be black and this may say well… what are my expectations of black people? But I'm very pleased because it's so important, so so important.'

The responses of the eight research participants who made similar comments is in direct contrast to Ang-Lygate's (1997 experience) in which she gained access to interview Hong Kong Chinese research participants only by declaring her Chinese heritage. Ang-Lygate, suspicious of the value placed on 'race', racial identity and the valorizing of 'blackness', takes exception to the exclusive claims made by racial or minority ethnic groups, considering it to perpetuate racial divisions. As in my case, Ang-Lygate's name, accent and use of language on the telephone probably belied her ethnicity in her initial contact with interviewees, some of whom were obstructive or unenthusiastic. She recalls:

> 'I was actually not allowed to belong until I colluded with the myth of authentic ethnicity and confessed my 'true' Chinese identity.'
> (p. 179)

In my case, although some interviewees knew of my ethnicity, those who were suspicious were also curious, and willing, it seems, to work with a white or Black interviewee on the research subject matter. That is not to deny that some interviewees did not refer to the potential for exploitation by the researcher (me) or some kind of appropriation or 'cultural theft' of material should I have turned out to be white. Participants talked of their alertness to the possibility of having their ideas 'stolen' by their peers in training, and were knowledgeable about how this had happened in the past with white researchers (Constantine-Simms 1995).

The research process has made me more alert to the reality and consequences of racism. In an early research diary entry I noted:

> 'Racism... I see it, smell it everywhere...it comes
> at me in waves...on television, radio, newspapers
> I become the research. I see it in trainees, colleagues,
> in my husband. I am vigilant...'

Later research diary entries include my impressions of the interviewee and curiosity about how they resolved their life and work experiences with their work as therapists.

Implications of the findings for the counsellor trainer and counselling training in general

The major implication from the findings is the urgent need for trainers to be aware of issues of 'race' and culture in their training and delivery of training, and to make their understanding of theory and practice explicit. It is also clear that trainers will

need to access further training themselves in how to facilitate discussion and work in their training programmes associated with issues of 'race' and culture, regardless of whether there are Black students present on the course of training or not. This is of particular importance for the Black trainees on a training course, who are likely to have had a different pre-training experience and may have different needs to their white counterparts.

The findings show that some trainers are aware of the issues of 'race' and culture, but are reluctant to include them in the training programme out of an anxiety that this aspect of training is problematic. The findings also suggest that the apparent lack of attention paid to these issues affects the dynamics of the group and the quality of experience for all.

The more serious impact of this lack of attention to issues of 'race' and culture is on the black client, who is likely to be assigned to a white counsellor (the majority of counsellors are white) who may be supervised by an uninformed supervisor, black or white.

The research evidence suggests that little attention has been paid in the counselling profession to the training of the trainer, a point made by Thomas (1998). Although the BACP has a counselling training accreditation scheme, trainers are required to provide evidence of their teaching and student evaluations by portfolio. No significant attempts have been made to examine the rôle and basic competence threshold of the trainer because this area of investigation is complex and contentious. Currently, there is no national legislation or framework to support such an investigation.

The observation and monitoring of trainers is cumbersome and would need to take place in an environment which is usually bound by confidentiality and negotiated participant agreement. The training group is often seen as a 'closed' group not easily accessible to scrutiny. The same can apply to those who comprise the community of trainers and supervisors, often seen as a closed group. As several counsellors suggested, the situation is self-perpetuating, with little impetus to change, as the counsellors who become trainers and supervisors have all been trained similarly.

The findings show a high level of challenge from the participants to the largely uncritical Eurocentric bias of counselling training. They complain that little effort is made to acknowledge that other forms of therapy exist and may be equally effective for the culturally different client seeking help. The dilemma emerging for the Black

counsellor is that moving away from the dominant hegemony of Eurocentric counselling theory could lead to marginalisation, affecting their career progress and work prospects. Remaining solely within the western traditions of counselling could compromise their own beliefs and counselling practice methods. Like Taylor-Muhammad (2001), some of the research participants (GM, DP, FN, HL, IK, KI, LH, PD, RB, TZ, DW, LO, OL, RI) admitted that, once qualified, they had adapted or abandoned their learning and training in a core theoretical model to meet the needs of their black clients. This was another example of their ways of surviving; 'playing the game' in order to get their 'piece of paper' and then to survive in a majority white occupation.

Fanon (1967) describes the process by which black people gain honorary white citizenship by speaking like a white person; it is almost as if by 'speaking' the Eurocentric language of counselling and psychotherapy the black counsellor becomes an 'honorary white' and takes on the culture of the white majority.

External support networks - advantages and disadvantages for the Black counsellor

Throughout their training and subsequent practice counsellors are encouraged to identify a self-care system and develop support networks. Of necessity, counsellors come to understand that they themselves are a resource for their clients and that this personal resource of self, if it is to remain effective, needs to be maintained and supported to avoid 'burn-out'.

In general terms, the counsellor's self-care and support network draws on resources of family and friends, use of personal therapy, attending for clinical supervision of counselling work, further training, and maintaining hobbies and interests. Other recommended sources are: self-monitoring through such activities as meditation, journal writing, and attending to spiritual interests.

Who am I? How did I get here? What can I offer? What am I here for? How can I contribute? And who is there for me? Are key questions asked of all counselling trainees, and to some extent are being continuously asked by all individuals of themselves. Counselling trainers facilitate exercises and training sessions with expectations that they will be able to witness and assess some evidence of this exploration 'live' through group work and in subsequent written assignments.

The research data demonstrated that the majority of Black counsellors interviewed used the training experience and the periods of introspection to withdraw from the

training group and reflect on the questions alone and outside of the counselling training environment. In their assessment it was safer than trying to explore these fully with peers and trainers who did not seem to understand or affirm them or their experience. Sources of literature which examined the counsellor's support system were not discovered which could provide adequate points for comparison with the Black counsellors' experiences referred to in this research. In their identification of support networks, research participants engaged in a number of activities and explorations, as summarised below, some of which they recognised had begun before training and were in part a motivating factor to begin counselling training.

Who am I? - The questioning of identity, exploration of racial identity, recognition of differences and similarities between self and others, in society, in the training group. For example, through this exploration KP explained: 'I have to separate what is a Black man query from who am I? what is me? This suggests that his racial sense of self will be distinct from his character, almost having separate responsibilities, attributes and responses. This analysis is in part shared by JJ who wanted to be seen as 'JJ [his name] and black', an individual who happened to be black, rather than just a black man. Helms (1995) and Atkinson et al. (see Sue and Sue 1990, p 97) refer to these exploratory questions and responses as being part of the Conformity stage or status (Appendix 3b).

How did I get here? - Developing an interest in exploring cultural roots, family history and ethnicity, religious and spiritual roots, examining personal history against a background of current historical, social and political context. Research participants described how their explorations involved them in reading black history books, investigating Black writing and prominent Black leaders, these helping to define their racial identity.

In terms of the racial identity models developed by Helms (1995) and Atkinson et al. (1989), it would seem that the research participants were at or around the stages of Dissonance, Resistance and Immersion/Emersion, Internalization and Integrative Awareness for the remaining questions (see Appendix 3).

What can I offer? – Research participants described how they came to recognise the inner and outer resources they have as a counsellor for their work clients. Some counsellors claimed that their experiences as Black people meant that they could offer effective empathic understanding of what it is to be misunderstood, ignored, silenced, stereotyped, marginalised, pitied, feared, loved and not loved.

What can I contribute? – As stated earlier, many of the Black counsellors in the research regarded counselling as an emancipatory tool for all clients, and especially useful for black clients. They were also developing an understanding of the rôle that the Black counsellor can play in making a difference within the black community, declaring an interest in and desire to help and support members of the black community. The majority of the Black counsellors worked in statutory or voluntary community settings rather than independent practice, and perceived their work with clients as political as well as social.

Who is there for me? - Research participants talked of actively seeking out like-minded Black counsellors and professionals to continue their discussions and explorations about issues of 'race' and culture. For some participants it was also crucial to have access to support from family, friends, peers, and mentors whilst training, in the face of the challenging circumstances of their training and incidents that occurred.

Identification of the counsellor's support network acted as a cushion against some of the challenges to their self-esteem and also served as a means of reality checking whilst training and in practice. This checking of events might have involved examining critical incidents in training and practice to discern how much the person or other factors had contributed to it. Other counsellors had to dig deeper, seeking inspiration and support from Black literature, conference attendances, seminars and workshops, working on issues in personal therapy (with effective white and Black counsellors), and developing support networks with other Black counsellors or peers. The advantage for the Black counsellor of building such support networks, most of which are external to the counselling practice community, is that they tend to be diverse, and embedded in the social structures in the community.

The disadvantage is that few are directly related to the counselling profession, which can make career progression more difficult for the Black counsellor, and could be considered to be collusive, encouraging an 'us against them' approach. Whilst being supportive, Black mentors and family members may not have an understanding of what counselling involves.

The research period - changes noted

As stated earlier, this research spans a five-year period beginning in September 1998. Although this was not an ideal situation it did enable me to take into account changes

and developments that occurred in counselling training and practice in general over the five-year period.

Over this time span I have been able to interview newly qualified counsellors who started their training mid-way through my research period in 2000 and qualified at post-graduate diploma or master level by 2003. It is reasonable to claim that their reported training experiences are contemporaneous with the changes occurring within the profession.

In her letter to the editor of the journal Race and Cultural Education in Counselling, (1997/8), Golnar Bayat recalls how she was offered a place on a BAC accredited course, subject to her gaining experience 'outside of her own community', a requirement not made of her white peers who, it was assumed, could counsel anybody. In the closing stages of the course, the input of an invited speaker on inter-cultural counselling was deemed to be of more use to her than her fourteen white peers. It is hoped that things have changed markedly since then, but the indications are that the changes are patchy.

From 2000 to 2003, the interest in diversity issues has increased and is marked by the increase in professional journal articles and research material available. For example, the BACP's 'Counselling and Psychotherapy Journal' (CPJ) has published over 40 articles on issues relating to diversity, covering 'race', gender, disability, sexual orientation and spirituality. This is a marked increase of over forty percent on the previous three years, and takes into account the change from quarterly to monthly issue of the journal. This is also reflected in the output from published authors on the same or similar issues.

Tuckwell's work (2001; 2002; 2003) marks a shift to in-depth exploration of the relevance of understanding the white identity of the white therapist. In September 2003, in my capacity as trainer, I received information about two courses for counselling practitioners which were specifically aimed at exploring white identity. Some of this increased activity is a reflection of the apparent governmental and national interest in diversity, social inclusion, institutional racism and national identity, not all of which is altruistic. These 'buzz words' and phrases are against a backdrop of hostility towards asylum seekers, anti-Muslim activity, using the destruction of the Twin Towers in the United States and the deaths that occurred as an excuse for racist behaviour.

However, recent reported statistical evidence and research indicates continued struggles and difficulties for minority ethnic peoples in all spheres of life in Britain (Frith 2003; Dodd 2004), including some high profile cases which have become newsworthy. For instance, so far in 2004 there has been the case of a renowned football manager and pundit (Ron Atkinson) making racist remarks about players whilst on air. Whilst Atkinson has admitted his error, he has denied racism and received supportive comments from black and white football players and commentators who are accepting of racist language as the norm. Another example is the case of Dr Fareda Banda, a senior academic at the School of Oriental and African Studies, who in 2003 discovered that for six years she had been paid £10,000 less than her white peers and junior academics. Banda perceived that amongst her colleagues, challenges about gender discrimination were palatable but not challenges about 'race':

> 'As a black woman, I consider that both 'race' and sex discrimination are unacceptable, and cannot see that one is somehow preferable to, or less shameful than, the other. I do not have the option of waking up in the morning and deciding to be either a woman or black. I am both simultaneously, and therefore experience multiple and intersecting discrimination.'
> (Verkaik 2004: 4)

Even more concerning are the reports of British National Party activity in schools, recruiting children as young as nine with the full support of their parents and local communities (Herbert 2004).

Concerns about counselling training

An investigation of literature specifically referring to the needs of particular client groups such as lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients (Davies and Neal 1997) and hearing impaired clients (Corker 1994) indicates that counsellors who share a similar minority experience to a particular client group have criticisms of current training and counselling provision available, and elect to comment on this in such texts. Davis and Neal highlight the need for training and the retraining of counsellors so that they may work effectively with gay and lesbian clients. The publication in 1996 of their book on counselling lesbian and gay clients was the first of its kind in Britain.

So far, the focus of much of the literature available on training to work with specific client groups is restorative, focusing on ways in which change in training can be of

help to future trainees. There is scant information available on how the training experience of counsellors has affected their practice, and in particular, little which seems to chronicle the journey of the minority counselling trainee and how their training affects their practice and progress as practitioners.

One theme that is common to all the texts on issues relating to specific client groups is that whilst training programmes may declare values of honesty and openness, unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding, and seek to imbue counsellor trainees with these values, it does not necessarily follow that these core conditions can be spread, like paint, across a spectrum of client conditions or issues, without a significant amount of individual exploration by the counselling trainee. What is continually criticised is the complete lack, or the derisory amount, of time devoted to the needs of particular client groups.

Consistent in the review of literature and in the research findings is that a few hours or a day workshop is the usual amount of time allocated for issues relating to the needs of particular minority client groups (Davies and Neal 1997), and that this is insufficient.

Quite often it is the presence and/or the insistence of the lone or minority counselling trainee or trainees that provides the impetus for such training input. The research findings also showed that over half of the interviewees were asked to supply specialist input on issues of race and culture in the counselling relationship by their counselling trainer or trainers.

The review of recent literature and the findings of this research pose questions and challenges about the adequacy of counselling training and its ability to train counsellors who can deal with the issues of particular client groups. It also points to a need to review the way in which training is delivered, perhaps focusing on anti-discriminatory policies, values, and processes as central, and working with cultural difference as generic, to all counselling training programmes.

There are also implications for the training and development of trainers and counselling supervisors, thus supporting Feltham's criticisms (1999) of the core theoretical model of training currently promoted in UK. The core theoretical model places emphasis on training in a particular counselling model or orientation rather than concentrating on the practice of counselling and the counsellor-client relationship.

Feltham suggests that what is needed in training is:

> '...exposure to a selection of highly condensed traditional theories, plus perhaps training in the most useful techniques, a concentration on relationship factors, but above all room to think, study and engage in dialogue on human suffering in history, culture and in ourselves.'
> (p. 190)

The review of the literature on training did show general agreement that training courses needed to examine discriminatory practice in general: for instance, racism, sexism, ageism, disability, and homophobia were highlighted as requiring attention. However, the inclusion in the training programme of reference to, and/or examination of, minority issues needs to be handled skilfully by trainers. It is also apparent that the tutor's or trainer's lack of ability or confidence to facilitate the training in these areas may be responsible for the absence of such issues from training programmes.

Black counsellor research participants commented that trainers who identified with a minority group were comfortable and confident in raising issues associated with the client groups of that minority in the training.

What has emerged from the research findings is that the quality and quantity of training on 'race' and culture in counselling as experienced by Black counsellors in all cases militated against its effectiveness and in some cases did more harm than good, encouraging stereotyping and peer hostility, and having a harmful effect on the Black trainee. Such experiences could ultimately affect the Black and white counsellors' relationships with their clients, as Appendices 4 & 5 indicate.

Only two examples were mentioned (by research participants) of ways in which the Black counsellors experienced innovative training on issues of 'race' and culture, and these were offered by visiting Black trainers. Their recollections of these one-off training sessions were that they were challenging to them as well as to their white peers. Invariably, the Black counsellors interviewed claimed that they had learnt nothing from their counsellor training about 'race' and culture. This supports the contentions of Lago and Thompson (2002) and Charleton (1996) that being in a minority limits the trainee's learning opportunities. The Black counsellors who were qualified social workers stated that they were indebted to their prior training experiences in social work for offering them the opportunity to explore issues of 'race' and culture in a relatively secure and affirming environment, and that without

it they might not have 'survived' the training or felt prepared for subsequent counselling work.

Generally, the review of literature recommends that diversity and difference need to be explored and celebrated, but says little about how counselling trainers and counselling trainee peers might deal with difference and diversity within their midst. It is almost as if those who are 'different' or 'other' are consigned to being the client only, and rendered invisible in the classroom. As Ridley (1995) suggests, this has consequences for the trainee who is 'different'. No real consideration has been given to the minority or 'other' being a practitioner or professional.

The research findings showed that Black counsellor trainees were often paradoxically visible in a tokenistic sense, and yet invisible as training groups largely operated a colour blind approach. They were also silenced and yet loud, their peers being intrigued and intimidated by their silence. In addition they were powerless and yet perceived as powerful. The findings showed that counselling trainers failed to recognise or meet the needs of the Black counsellor trainee and this often led the Black trainee to seek out supplementary training during initial diploma training or post-qualification. It was less clear or likely that their peer white trainees saw this type of training as a priority or even necessary. This point is supported by the evidence of Davies and Neal (1997), who described a challenge from a trainee about the necessity of exploring gay, lesbian and bisexual issues. The trainee insisted: 'Surely we're all non-judgemental and gay people are just the same as the rest as the rest of us so why do we need training to work with them?' (p. 2). The use of the word 'them' in this quotation is significant; little seems to have changed since this publication.

Summary

The recurring themes and issues within these research findings appeared in the available literature on race and cultural issues in counselling and in the recorded experiences of Black practitioners in other fields such as in teaching (Osler 1997), medical settings (McInnis 2002), and higher education (Jones 2001). The findings are summarised as follows:

- Despite some recent changes to training curricula, scant attention is paid to an exploration of issues of 'race' and culture. There still seems to be a 'bolt-on' approach to providing input on these issues within training programmes. The strong Eurocentric bias present in counselling training programmes limits opportunities for critique and exploration of other counselling approaches.

- There is an expectation that Black students will 'teach' peer white trainees and trainers on issues related to 'race' and culture. The Black trainee is paradoxically 'visible' and can be rendered invisible in the training environment.

- On the whole, trainers are not aware of the needs of the Black trainee, and this is especially so when issues of 'race and culture' are explored within the training programme. Five research participants mentioned knowledgeable and 'aware' trainers. However, Black trainees were in general critical of trainers' group facilitation skills.

- Almost all of those interviewed stated that they had pursued self-study, personal research, or access to post-qualifying short courses on identity, 'race', and culture to develop their ability to work effectively with Black clients. Ten research participants claimed 'essential' knowledge of blackness gave them special and particular insights into the needs of Black clients.

- Research participants admitted to 'hiding parts of themselves', feeling under threat, and using silence as a means of self-protection in the training environment.

- Research participants were satisfied with some aspects of their training, particularly skills development, and the personal development opportunities available. However, the training experience overall was difficult for them: many of the difficulties centred on ethnicity and the apparent ignorance and/or denial of the impact of 'race', culture and racism.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analyses and discusses the data collected during the research period by focusing on the research questions mentioned in the first chapter. This is achieved by:

(i) reference to the relevant literature mentioned in the first three chapters, comparing these with the research findings where appropriate;

(ii) analysis and discussion of the themes emerging from the research findings;

(iii) reflecting on my rôle and experiences as researcher.

In Britain 2004, counselling is regarded as a cultural 'alternative' activity or even a religion. It is popular and can be effective, but as the statistics indicate is largely offered and consumed by middle class white people (Mind 2002; Nazroo 1997). The stereotype often associated with counsellors is reminiscent of that applied to social workers. That is, people who have left of centre political views, have interests in environmental issues, complementary therapies, are vegetarian or vegan, and have a distinctive style of informal dress.

On the whole, the Black counsellors interviewed for this research did not identify with this image of a counsellor and in some ways tried to distance themselves from the counsellor stereotype, declaring their wish to remain separate, not wanting to be part of the white mainstream stereotype. This seemed to be common thread running through the research interview results. The counsellors wanted to practise as counsellors but did not necessarily accept what they saw as the values of the white counsellors they encountered.

They were aware of the pressure to adopt the WOT ('way of talking') of the counsellor referred to earlier in Chapter 2 (Clarkson and Nippoda 1998), and sought to maintain their ethnicity and or black identity at all costs. Perhaps Black people who enter counselling training need to be aware that part of the training will involve the invitation to adopt and accept white lower-middle class values and to recognise that the culture, context and methodology of the training may evoke 'culture shock'.

Many of the Black counsellors interviewed for this research would probably already be labelled as 'lower middle class' in view of their previous occupations, qualifications and income.

Forty of the counsellors interviewed for this research had trained in further education or higher education institutions and were self-funded; four interviewees had financial support for their training from their employer. Some interviewees benefited from the concessionary fee rates offered by further education colleges and universities in their area. Counsellor training is expensive, requiring a heavy financial commitment over a period of at least four years. That most of the counsellors interviewed were willing to invest large sums of money on this type of training suggests that their income supported their training aspirations. This is more in line with so called middle class values and expectations.

Counselling organisations in general are aware, as is the BACP, of the ways in which funding for training debars large sectors of the population on the basis of cost rather than ability, and that this is often linked to minority group issues including class divisions and ethnicity. Such discussions are well rehearsed by Kearney (1996; 2003), House (2000), Lyons (2001), Gillon (2002) and others. Kearney (2003) claims that awareness of class oppression in therapy and training is little understood:

> '...the training world of counselling/psychotherapy operates from essentially middle class assumptions and values, assumptions that are rarely (if ever) challenged, and perceived to be apolitical and universal'. (p. 113)

Social differences are played down or ignored as being part of the external world. Like the Black counsellors participating in this research, Kearney argues that working class trainees are not in a position to challenge this status quo as it is assumed as the norm and they are often 'silenced' or withdraw from training because they do not fit in with the mores of the training group. Rex (1997) brings a class perspective to his study of race relations which could highlight the close links between black and white working class trainees' experiences.

The financial issues related above were rarely mentioned in the research findings as an inhibitor or a de-motivating factor, although some did reveal that they had made 'serious sacrifices' to complete their studies. This suggests that the Black counsellors interviewed were less concerned about the financial implications of their decision to train. Five counsellors did refer to the additional costs of personal therapy

and continual professional maintenance costs of monthly clinical supervision, and the additional requirements of post-qualification training experience.

Another possibility is that they perceive themselves as, and are, part of the black lower middle class; discussion about the costs of their training was not seen as relevant or appropriate for this research interview. This is likely, given the educational and professional profile of the sample. An indication of this comes in the response from one Black interviewee. Reflecting on his acceptance as a trainee on a course, he suspected this was because he appeared to fit in with middle-class values.

JJ (53 & 61): Sometimes I wonder if I spoke differently and looked differently, would I have got on?

Wounded healers?

It has been suggested that counsellors are 'wounded healers', and that they train to become counsellors although it is they who need counselling (Persaud 1996). This description might well apply to the Black trainee. The research findings do not necessarily bear out this hypothesis, but there were indications that the decision to train as a counsellor was based on an interest in self-exploration and understanding which might incorporate the current and historical wounds of the 'internal oppressor' and 'racial melancholia' that Cheng (2001) and Alleyne (2004) refer to, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this work.

Training methods

The training methods commonly used on counselling courses attempt to replicate some of the ways in which the counsellor and client explore the client's issues in their relationship. For some of the training, this is likely to involve counselling trainees working together on personal material in an open forum, whilst reflecting on interpersonal relationships as they develop, in order to enhance their self-awareness. This training method can create highly charged atmospheres and dramatic heated exchanges between participants that necessitate skilful facilitation from the counselling trainer. The Black trainees in this research were not always willing to participate fully in training activities as they recognised that it put them, as minority members, at risk. The research findings showed how research participants consistently referred to, and described, feeling 'unsafe', 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in the presence of their white peers.

Totally positive reports of the counselling training experience are rare: none were encountered during the data collection for this research from Black or white counsellors I came into contact with. All were able to relate stories about incidents that had occurred and conflicts that arose during their training programme. Although this led to some counselling trainees withdrawing from training altogether, the process did not seem to deter the very large number of counselling trainees that exist from completing their training.

Those who have qualified describe the time demands and the emotional and physical challenges that counselling and counselling training present in graphic terms, supporting much of the literature about training which refers to the struggles, delights and painful points of the counselling training journey.

YU recognised that her venture into counselling training coincided with her struggles with her identity and growing political awareness, in particular, her interest in 'race' relations and feminism. She described her early counselling training experiences as:

> YU (38): '... extremely difficult, 'race' and racism was over-whelming on the course. I naïvely believed people on a counselling course would be more aware. I used to leave crying each week...'

Buchanan and Hughes (2000) quote the experiences of counselling trainees, who are mostly in agreement that counselling training enhances self-awareness and self-discovery, and that most trainees do not regret that aspect of the training even if critical of other elements like course content, assessment process, course delivery and the trainers.

It does seem however that personal growth and personal development was enhanced often by solitary reflection for the Black counselling trainee, and that personal insights were rarely shared with their peers or tutors unless in a formal way through formal written assignments. So many of the research participants referred to their withdrawal from group learning and process time in their training, hiding their true selves, withholding their observations and thoughts, retreating into silence as a way of surviving in what they perceived to be a hostile environment. This strategy is also documented in work by Osler (1997), in her research into the education and careers of black teachers, and by a Black counsellor, Foluke Taylor-Muhammad (2001),

reflecting on her training experiences. However, such a strategy can also lead to a heightened sense of isolation and with this, self-doubt.

Analysis of research data

The analysis of the data that follows presents a record of the Black counsellors' individual and common experiences of training and their range of perspectives on those experiences. The analysis attempts to answer the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1, using these as a framework, showing the similarities and differences in experience and exploring the recurring themes emerging from the data.

What is different about the needs of the Black counselling trainees?

The needs of the Black counselling trainee are linked to the social and historical context in which they exist. Black trainee counsellors training in another country where they are not in the minority may encounter different and separate challenges, which affect their needs.

A personal experience of visiting Nigeria, a country with a majority black population and working alongside black counsellors and trainers, was that their visibility was not an issue. Differences that did exist were associated with religious practices, cultural traditions and preferred counselling orientation. My Nigerian colleagues were mystified by the area of my research and found it difficult to comprehend what the differences in experience of training might be for black and white counsellors. Black trainee counsellors in Britain exist in a context where racism and institutional racism are identified as social problems. Black people are often seen as 'other', or 'problematic', and the black population as forming a substantial part of those deemed to be socially excluded. Beliefs and understandings about class and their professional status could mean that black and white working class trainee counsellors (class status not denoted by income) do not aspire to counselling training because they are unfamiliar with it as a profession.

The research participants' comments below show that being physically different has an impact on a group, and this impact is unavoidable for the Black trainee counsellor. Fanon (1967) asserts that the Negro is a 'phobogenic object', a stimulus for anxiety in a white person (p. 151). This dramatic description is matched by some of the comments made by research participants about the impact of their arrival:

WW (78): ...when a Black person enters a room full of white people, heads turn. There is no doubt about it, that is the difference...and it's here we go again...'

ZT (60): …being Black isn't an add on, it's fundamental to who people are… it will affect their view.

MG (94): …you can run, but you can't hide…'

SA (38): …when they [white people] see us they see a shell. They do not know what is in the shell.'

Acknowledgement of the Black counsellor's visible difference was rarely announced verbally unless initiated by the trainee in their introductions to the course. This apparent 'colour blind' approach adopted by white peers and trainers on their course did little to instil confidence in the research participants at the start of their training. Apart from one exception, the research participants were in the minority in their training, and over seventy per cent (34) of the interviewed counsellors were the only Black trainee on the course. These results were surprising given that research participants had completed their training in city locations known for a higher density of minority ethnic population than smaller towns in Britain (see Appendix 9). These cities seemed to be recruiting Black counselling trainees in single figures. The counsellors interviewed reported that their experience of being the lone black person was also replicated in their workplace.

The need for acknowledgement of difference and some evidence of empathic understanding at an early stage in the training programme was seen as contributing to the trainee's sense of security and trust in their peers. The absence of this acknowledgement was anticipated and yet disappointing for most of the participants, who had assumptions about counselling training sensitivities that were not realised in their experience. The counsellors talked of being viewed as an 'exotic element' or novelty. Black counsellors perceived that white course members had higher expectations of them than they felt that they were capable of fulfilling. Added to this there seemed to be an assumption that the Black counsellors would teach others about their culture (Collins 1991; Dumas 1985; Jones 2001). The Black trainees perceived this as being set up to fail, and were resentful of this demand on their energy.

The experience of being different may be shared by other trainees who identify as part of a minority group, but their visibility may not be so potent or laden with

negative imagery based on historical or socio-political factors as discussed in Chapters 1 & 2.

The notion that being Black means 'not being seen as a person' points to the need of the Black counselling trainee to be seen as an individual who is likely to have experienced discrimination and almost certainly will whilst on the training course. The likelihood is that the Black counsellor trainee has arrived at the training by overcoming a large number of obstacles and may have endured personal and professional challenges that can only be fully understood by those who have experienced being constantly on the outside looking in.

Furthermore, because there are few visible black counsellor rôle models, the Black counselling trainee is breaking new ground. The Black counsellor may not have access to networking opportunities more readily available to their white peers. Like their white working class peers, they may not have knowledge of the counselling worker community or the system in which it operates. As JJ pointed out:

> '...I didn't want to be given a place on the course because they need to fill a quota of Black people...I think of counselling as something white people do.' (48)

This was not an uncommon apprehension, indicating that counsellors were perceived as being part of an exclusive white group. A sense of exclusion is supported by YU's comment about joining this working group, and similar professions are quoted below.

YU: 'I've got a mountain not a chip on my shoulder'.

YU, a qualified counsellor, had extensive experience in the statutory and voluntary sector and community development. At the time of interview she had embarked on a second post-graduate course. She was not unfamiliar with the isolating experience of being the only Black student or trainee on a course, but rationalised her dislike of this with her desire to 'do the course and get the piece of paper'.

The research participants described their feelings but did not suggest ways in which their early experience in a counselling training group could have been improved. It was almost as if the reception they received from their peers and trainers was to be expected and endured as part of the 'lot' of the Black counsellor.

This experience of isolation which to some extent is self-imposed for survival is echoed by Cecily Jones (2001), a Black academic, who describes her current and past experiences:

> 'My experiences of isolation, invisibility, marginalisation and powerlessness encountered as a Black female student and teacher have been repeated to greater or lesser degrees throughout the various institutions in which I have studied and worked. The urge to retreat into the self-imposed invisibility and silence that enabled me to survive as a student is sometimes compellingly strong. Yet I recognise that self-imposed invisibility is double-edged. While it enables me to achieve some short term gains, it is at the same time to collude in my own disempowerment, for it demands the negations of self and identity as a Black woman.'
>
> (p. 158)

Recognition from white trainers and trainees that the Black counsellor may not feel part of the group and choose to distance themselves from the training group at times is an important aspect of the Black trainee's experience. In some cases, although not reported by any of the research participants, white trainers have been sensitive to this and encouraged the formation of support groups for minority students where they have been able to discuss and explore issues affecting them amongst themselves in relative safety.

The trainer's knowledge of racial identity models and self-assessment of their own status or stage within the model could be helpful to the Black trainee, raising awareness of the issues that might affect relationships with peers and tutor early in the training programme. Discussion at the recruitment stage of the course about the Black trainee's needs begins the dialogue and invites joint reflection between the trainer and trainee, even if the counselling trainee does not necessarily identify as Black or anticipate any conflicts occurring.

Financially, emotionally, and professionally there are fewer opportunities for the Black counsellor to realise their investment of time, effort, energy and money in their training in the same way as their white peers. It is well known that this situation is replicated in most other white collar professions for black people. Although they are often assured by clear numerical evidence and reassured by peers and trainers that there is a lack of Black counsellors and that they are much needed, it would seem the research findings show evidence that the majority of Black counsellors found occupations within the sponsored and subsidised voluntary sector or the public

service sector, or returned to their original occupations. For some this was a deliberate act, as they wanted opportunities to work with black clients. Few (three) were willing to consider portfolio or independent practice, which is a common way of working amongst white counsellor professionals.

The research participants indicated that the number of black clients accessing counselling services was slowly growing, in that they were seeing more black clients. However, apart from specialised counselling services for minority ethnic clients, most of the Black counsellors taking part in the research were working with mainly white clients.

What do Black counsellor trainees bring to training that might put them at an advantage or disadvantage?

Probably the main quality that could be seen as an advantage that Black counsellor trainees bring to their training is knowledge and prior experience of achievement as usually a hard painful struggle. The responses of the interviewees when asked about their training suggests that they underestimated the intensity of the emotional pain and struggle they would endure, but most agreed this experience was familiar experience for them. YU voiced a wish to be a rôle model for other Black counsellors and said that 'anger was the driving force' behind her pursuance of training and post-graduate studies.

The research evidence suggests that whilst trainers saw the benefits of having Black students on their training courses they did little to attend to the needs of their students, and in some cases contributed to their difficult experiences.

It seemed that after the initial enthusiasm for the arrival of Black trainees on their courses many trainers viewed the Black counselling student as a problem, and became impatient and resistant to the raising of issues relating to 'race' and culture, or devolved that responsibility implicitly or directly to the Black trainee. Black trainees were often perceived as placing additional demands on tutors who already felt pressurised by the requirements of their task.

In their interviews, Black counsellors talked of having responsibility to directly challenge racism and racist comments directed at them or voiced generally, without the support of tutors.

As RB recounts from her Master of Arts course:

> 'I was really aware of...the embarrassment amongst white tutors and white counselling trainees who don't have enough contact with Black people. Because there were examples of overt racism and rather than being challenged by the tutors, it was left to the Black students to challenge it.'
> (57)

MN argued similarly that his experience of being Black was useful to other students on his training course but not to him. He was seen as a resource.

Selecting a training course

Most of the interviewees opted for training courses at their local university or further education college, rather than making a choice based specifically on knowledge of course content. Selecting a course because it claimed to be keen to address issues of 'race' and culture did not necessarily lead to satisfaction, as KI (18) discovered:

> 'And when it came to choosing a course, I wasn't happy with the curriculum that was on offer at the two [local]* universities because they didn't mention 'race' at all... they didn't mention cultural issues at all whereas [this university in another city]* did and when I went for the interview I kind of asked of them how comfortable they were at dealing with those issues and they said, well they said the right things basically, and so I thought it was worth making the commitment to travel one day a week for two years to [this university]* to do the course.'

* words in parentheses to preserve interviewee confidentiality.

VW (19): And how was that experience?

KI (20): It was a disappointment in terms of the 'race' issue. I enjoyed the course pretty much but the disappointing things, the things that were a let-down was the way in which 'race' was dealt with.

A compensatory factor for KI was that there were other Black trainees on the course with whom she could talk with about issues that arose that had implications for Black students. Having other Black peers lessened her isolation and lightened her load in other ways, as the following excerpts reveal:

KI (20): ...I've often been in situations where I have been the only Black person in that kind of situation and it's much harder work then.

VW (21): Harder work - what do you mean by that?

KI (22): It's harder work getting the issues taken seriously because it's down to…it feels as though the pressure is on you as the one Black person to represent all sorts of things or to raise all sorts of things whether you want to or not. Or if you don't then your silence is taken as agreement or collusion with the things that might happen…when things did happen it helped that there were other Black students there to witness it and you didn't feel that you necessarily had to be the one that challenged because there were other people to share that burden with also to talk about stuff afterwards.

The above exchange with KI is typical of the Black counsellors' training experience as it appears in this research. KI's initial concern was to establish that trainers would be 'comfortable' addressing issues of 'race' and culture in the training. She was already aware of the 'discomfort' that this often brings in white trainers and the consequent discomfort and dissatisfaction that she would experience as a result. She measured their comfort in words, contained in the prospectus and at interview: 'they said the right things'. It would be useful here to know what these words were and this is something that I regret not pursuing during the interview.

Convinced by these words, she took up her training which, on the whole, she found enjoyable. Although she was disappointed by the attention given to exploring issues of 'race' and culture, she felt relieved of the total 'burden' of being the only Black trainee, as outlined by QC:

I couldn't talk about 'race'… didn't feel safe. In [this city*] where you've got [a high proportion of Black people] and it wasn't touched on the course at all.
(24)

*[Words in parentheses for confidentiality]

Black students as trophies and problems

RB (29): Currently, my tutor is bragging because he has four Black people on his course. Four who identify themselves as Black and one who doesn't

VW (30): What is there to brag about?

RB (31): That he's managed to get four people on his course who are Black and I'm thinking hang on that's not your doing that's because we made a choice to come on this course.

The transcript extract above quotes Black counsellor RB, who expressed dissatisfaction with the training she received. Despite its prospectus' claim to address issues of 'race' and culture, in her view it did not meet its commitment or live up to students' expectations. RB recalled that out of a two year course, two one-day workshops on issues of 'race' and culture were provided, after vigorous campaigning by the Black students on the course.

RB described how, throughout the training course, discussion points concerning issues of 'race' and culture were mostly raised by the Black students and quite often ignored by white trainees, yet when similar points were raised by the tutors, these carried special significance amongst her white peers. This lack of respect for their experience was a common complaint of the research participants:

> '…if I mentioned anything about 'race' it would get pushed aside but when the tutors said anything about 'race' as white people it was revered and it was like, hang on what's going on here?…'
> (RB: 33)

Dealing with racism from peers

Her experience on previous counselling training courses prompted and encouraged MG to enquire of her tutors how she would be supported should she experience racism from her peers. On the basis of their assurances, MG joined the course, and drew her tutor's attention to the first incident (involving a female student) that occurred. The outcome was a positive one from MG's point of view:

MG (32): I don't know what [my tutor] did but this woman started trying to get on with me after.

AZ recounted an incident where she complained about a student who made racist comments during a counselling skills practice session. This was eventually dealt with by a senior tutor at AZ's insistence.

You need to be better than?

As an outcome of their training experiences, the Black counsellors interviewed were convinced that they needed to be better than their white counterparts to secure employment or advancement within the profession. Good was not good enough: you

have to be better and have more 'pieces of paper' (qualifications). As KP states and others reiterate: 'You need to prove to prove that you're more than what the system says you are' (KP, OE, GT, LO, DW, MN).

The belief that a Black person needs to work harder and have more qualifications than a white person to achieve the same result is not entirely a false perception. This belief is based on employment evidence, examples of institutional racism and the reality of being part of the minority ethnic population. It is further evidence of the direct and subtle ways in which racism and internalised racism can affect the self-esteem of the Black counsellor and black people generally.

This pre-condition seems to apply to Blacks in employment in general within Britain. One Black counsellor noted that Black employees in the local authority that she worked for were seven times more likely to be disciplined or dismissed. The Black counsellor's awareness of the precariousness of the positions that Black people hold in groups is a classic piece of learning from their training experiences in group dynamics, which translates well into the workplace enabling them to appreciate the black client's position.

This perception that they need to prove something and work harder puts the Black counselling trainee at an immediate disadvantage. This is particularly so for counselling training, where a substantial amount of the assessment of counselling competence is rooted in group work, group activity and evidence of the development of interpersonal relationship skills.

The Black trainee, who may arrive somewhat defensive and reticent, suspicious and concerned about the need to try harder and work harder than their white peers in order to achieve the same or better result, might be perceived by peers and tutors as being 'hard to get to know', 'arrogant', 'defensive', 'not very open', 'prickly', 'critical', 'silent', 'brooding', and maybe 'angry'. These are some of the words and terms that I have heard white trainers use to describe their initial perceptions of Black trainees on their course.

Recent research findings by Alleyne (2004), investigating black workers' experience in a range of National Health Service settings, shows that this characterisation of black peoples' behaviour and attitude by their white colleagues is not isolated. White trainers may also feel the need to work harder to get to know and understand the Black trainee. In the informal discussions I have had with white colleagues, they describe themselves as feeling nervous, defensive, and anxious to do the right thing.

However, they are often perceived by Black trainees as complacent, lacking in knowledge about the impact of 'race' and culture by their poor responses, adopting a colour blind approach, and are ineffective in dealing with racism and facilitating exploration of racial issues and critical and judgemental of Black students (see Appendix 5). From the Black trainee's perspective, those trainers who were described as helpful and supportive were often unable to successfully counteract the insensitivity and ignorance of their trainer colleagues on matters of 'race' and culture.

The conflict of perception and lack of understanding on both sides does little to assist the development of good working relationships and honest communication within the training. This points to an obvious disadvantage for the Black trainee at an early stage.

Being in a training and work environment where a Black person is not in the minority evokes a different feeling and description of experience. Highlighting such contrasts, ZT describes her three different counselling training experiences, the second where she was in the minority, and the third where she trained in an all Black group. The excerpts below highlight her contrasting feelings as she adjusted to the demands of her course.

ZT(20): …I basically got a veiled threat after a couple of months of being on the course which was like - we haven't seen anything of you, if you don't cough up and show something, get in touch with something then you'll be off… It wasn't quite as overt as that but it was clear enough for me to know what was meant and so I decided I would play the game really in that I'd show something safe to share which meant they could tick a box but I also resented the fact I was put in that position.

Despite her resentment and being forced to perform, ZT found ways of surviving, but this involved using her emotional energy.

ZT(26): …there were times when I did feel relaxed, where I did have a laugh and had positive connections with people but the energy it takes is about remembering who I am and that I am powerful, I am creative and it doesn't matter if I don't say anything, it doesn't matter if I get angry, I'm not aggressive, that's the energy it takes.'

ZT (28) described her experience of being part of an all Black training group as:

> ...challenging. It challenged the core of my being... a very powerful experience being taught by people of African heritage...we looked at issues around identity, what is black identity...it shook me and challenged and moved me...it was a phenomenal experience...being amongst people who encouraged and supported me.

Elaborating on this, ZT (32) emphasised:

> ...it certainly wasn't easy, it's probably one of the hardest things I've ever done and on another level it was easy because I could just be me...but sometimes that isn't easy.

I'm here to stay... struggle and fight

The research participants quoted below provide examples of the embattled position that Black counselling trainees in this research were often working from. This position could be seen as advantageous for the Black counselling trainee as they are less likely to withdraw from the training and are prepared for what is regarded as challenging work. The majority of the counsellors interviewed entered counselling training with previous professional qualifications. This advantage, coupled with previous training experiences where they were in the minority, no doubt partly prepared them for what lay ahead.

Another factor, which applies to most counselling trainees (black and white), is that they have been recognised as skilful listeners by friends, family and colleagues, some of whom have suggested that they pursue counselling as a career. I advance this notion further by suggesting that Black counselling trainees have heightened listening skills because of their historical and social positions as outsiders, and/or observers, usually without power. This has echoes of the white master-black slave relationship even in a paternalistic sense, indicating that over centuries in relationships with whites, blacks have been habituated into being silent, and know that rôle well.

Over half of the research interviewees had poor secondary schooling experiences where their potential was not recognised, or ignored. For thirteen of the research participants, English was their second language; this and other factors made the Black counsellors within this research more determined to succeed.

An example of this determination is the way in which DW dealt with the difficulties she experienced in her attempts to gain a place on a Master of Arts (MA) counselling

course. DW had already completed a one-year counselling diploma, had a degree, and had been employed as a local authority counsellor for two years, yet her initial application was rejected. In a subsequent direct application and approach she was advised to study on another diploma course at a higher level so that she might be considered for the MA at a later date.

DW(11): My biggest fear about doing the diploma was surviving it. I applied to [Downtown*] university to do their MA but couldn't get on. I was told at interview that the course was not for me because I was not academically or psychologically ready.

* [Words in parentheses for confidentiality]

Whilst on the course, DW questioned her ability to survive once more, and used the strategy of keeping focused on survival by reminding herself to 'Do her work and get on with it'.

OE had a similar challenge, and the following excerpts illustrate how the research participant drew upon past experiences.

OE(163): Its almost as if it's a fight not just struggle I am determined to come through…I have been in a work situation where I suffered racial discrimination…for five years I stuck it out and… I've had this attitude..."This is where I'm staying…"

This determined and defiant stance was common amongst the research participants for themselves and on behalf of the communities that they identified with and worked in.

LO (32): I stayed because… I wasn't going to let anybody throw me out of the course…it was just another struggle… I'm used to struggles in this country.

XV (26): I don't think I'm the only Black woman who feels like this… There's something about if you're going to start something then you must finish it off… I don't want to be the one they say oh yeah she left, I want to stick at it, there's some kind of determination in me …especially around education …you make sure you get your piece of paper.

Participants pointed to their vision of the long term benefit of their training to the black communities and said/maintained that this sustained them in their struggles. DW, HS and RB referred to the way in which the presence of Black workers within a counselling service or organisation changed over time the ethnic balance of clients that used the services and also enhanced the chances of improvements in current counselling services available for black people.

Counselling – a transformative tool

As stated earlier, hooks (1982) observed that

> 'When people talk about the 'strength' of black women...they ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation.'
>
> (p. 6)

DW noted that her motivation for pursuing counselling training was based on her initial experience of knowing that she had access to 'a valuable and powerful tool' with which she could help to effect change within her clients. The impact of counselling on her personal development and self-understanding encouraged her to see how counselling could help to empower others and alter relationships. Research participants described how counselling and counselling strategies offered a better way of dealing with personal, interpersonal and social problems and that this 'powerful tool' could be used in their communities as well as in individual work with black clients.

In every aspect these research findings accord with those of the work of Douglas (1998) and Dumas (1985). In her investigation of the experiences of Black women managers Douglas found their experience to be one involving shame, alienation, exclusion, negating, and one in which they perceived themselves to be 'surviving'. Implicit in hooks' observation (1982) is the challenge for Black women counsellors to be clear that they are not collusive in their work with their clients (black and white), themselves modelling and encouraging endurance, or even forbearance, which is masquerading as strength. The adoption of counselling as a potentially transformative tool for use with black clients carries with it a requirement to monitor and be alerted to the damaging effects of internalised oppression in the client and counsellor. Recognition and understanding of these processes in the Black counsellor

and her supervisor are essential, thus providing further evidence of this need to be met in training.

Is it different for men?

For MN entering counselling training was a 'monumental step'. He had little knowledge of counselling before starting his work with Black men and families in the community. As the following extract shows, counselling presented him with a chance to explore some fundamental existential and ontological questions that continue to be themes in his life and work.

MN (16): I came from a family background that dealt with their problems in other ways.

VW (17): Such as?

MN (18): Such as arguing and fighting, taking drugs and drink not talking about it. I think the only feeling we talked about as a young man growing up was whether we were in love with this girl or this girl was in love with us and also feelings of hate. We talked about hate a lot. So I'm thinking that's what it was all about, about love and stuff like that.

VW (19): Love and hate - hate of?

MN (20): Society, the unfairness and injustice of the world, whose fault was it, that kind of thing. It was all Black and White and that was where I came from and that underpinned everything.

MN(22): [Counselling training]... has enabled me to get some kind of understanding of me as a person and what I feel I am as ...I see myself in terms of love and hate - Black in a white man's world, so very much the victim, very much the under-class, under-privileged. My parents would talk about Black men having to be so much better than white men to get anywhere in life, so my outlook on life wasn't that there are opportunities.

MN's description of his personal history and perspective on trying to make sense of living in a 'white man's world' was not as clearly articulated by other Black male research participants. However, others (DP, QC, AC, FN and KP) did share his experience of being aware of the need to acquit and defend themselves as Black men in their training group. They described feeling isolated and stereotyped at times by

the majority of women on their training course and that womens' and feminist perspectives were the central focus of the training, with little attention being given to men's experience and sensitivities.

MN (30), in describing his frustration, noted:

> '… the total disregard at times for my gender is irritating.'

He found it more useful to explore 'race' in a majority white male training environment.

MN (60): …it allowed me to begin to bond with men, white men In a way that I hadn't done previously. I hadn't explored any feelings outside of hate. So yes that was good. I was able to explore 'race' more openly with men.

Although he did not seem to suggest a hierarchy of needs, it was clear from his account that exploration of his male identity was important in view of the negative stereotypes associated with Black men. His peers agreed that they saw him as someone to be wary of, powerful and unpredictable. What MN wanted was to be accepted as a Black man in the training group rather than as an object of fear and fascination. He believed this was never achieved '…so I had to learn to accept myself'.

For some male research participants, the focus on women's issues during counselling training enabled the Black male counsellors to develop different relationships with women. FN described how he rediscovered his mother' as result of his training experience. KP told of how emotionally supportive he found his female peers. MN explained how his decision to work with a white female counsellor for his own personal development was a deliberate choice, because of and in spite of his 'difficult' relationships with the white female peers during his training.

KP explained how he worked hard to disassociate himself from the stereotyped images of Black males he believed were held by the women in his training. As the only male in the training group, and a Black man, he was clear about how to present himself:

KP (118-124): …I don't want to come across as aggressive. If I go quiet [my peers will say] there's something going on, what's the problem KP…?

> [they would speculate aloud] … Is he going to explode…? [to them] my non-verbal communication as a Black man was very powerful.

Throughout his training, KP believed that his peers made him continually aware that to them he was seen as intimidating and powerful, physically and sexually. These attributes were not apparent to me in my observation of him or in his stature. He was of average height and slim build. During our interview, KP commented that because I was Black he was sure that I read his non-verbal communication accurately and that he felt relaxed and comfortable with that knowledge. This point was echoed by all of the male interviewees in various ways. Similarly, MN (52) recalled how he experienced relief and release from his stereotype when he had worked alongside Black female colleagues as an equal.

Two of the paired research interviews negotiated were male and female pairings. My observation of these was that the participants worked well as a team of equals, where no mention was made of the Black male stereotype in either case.

In striving to dilute and dispel this stereotyped image of the Black male, KP described how he presented himself, especially when raising the subjects of 'race' and culture:

KP (112,114,116): …Nobody would say the obvious… When I spoke I would always speak from the client's perspective. I was fully aware that it could turn into who does he think he is? ...I became the policeman.

Two things seem important here: KP felt that his only option was to speak from the client's perspective rather than from his own. This had something to do with his need to be safe and protected from the potential hostile reactions of his white peers. He described this method as 'disarming' his peers, and was concerned that he might appear aggressive and forceful and that this would alienate him from his peers and tutors whom he found on the whole to be supportive.

This distancing or 'disarming' strategy, whilst demonstrating his empathic skills as a trainee, also reinforces the notion of the Black person choosing to be in the position of client rather than the professional equal of counsellor. It is argued here that by electing to speak from the client's perspective KP denied himself the opportunity to get useful information about his practice as a counsellor. KP (108) admitted to 'missing… the type of honest communication about Black culture' that he felt would have been useful to him.

It also seemed important to the Black male counsellors interviewed that they were seen as good rôle models by male clients, and by black male clients in particular. The research evidence indicates that the predominantly female training environment does not generally allow for realistic exploration of black-white relations which was beneficial for trainee Black male counsellors. However, the Black male counsellors interviewed did learn more about women as clients and the social constructions of male and female stereotypes, thus expanding their knowledge about some of the intricacies of gender relations.

What did Black counsellors derive from training that enabled them to work with black and white clients?

In at least half of the cases, very little if anything has changed in terms of satisfactory provision of input on issues of 'race' and culture. Three of the research participants who were also diploma/masters graduates on BACP accredited courses reported that they had been invited back to their training course to deliver input on the session or sessions allocated to the exploration of issues of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship.

All three interviewees stated that the training input on issues of 'race' and culture in counselling had been very small and that they did not necessarily feel equipped to work with black clients on the basis of their training alone. It would seem that the trainers who invited their ex-students back did so on the basis that their students had acquired expertise and experiences in these issues during the intervening year or years since their graduation.

One research participant (YU) described how her course tutor offered to pay her to provide the input on 'race' and culture for her peers' and the tutor's benefit. The fact that payment of YU for teaching a session would alter the dynamics of the group, and, more importantly, would deny YU an opportunity to receive some training input from a trainer, did not seem to be considered by the trainer concerned.

Counselling white clients

Most of the research participants interviewed were working with white clients. A quarter of the participants also worked in counselling organisations established to meet the needs of minority ethnic clients, or had a special remit to work with black clients as part of their post.

MG describes her initial feelings when working with a white client:

MG (52): …a part of me felt like a Black oppressed woman

> that had to prove herself to be so much better
> than if a white woman was sitting facing another
> white woman.

These feelings and thoughts were not uncommon amongst the research participants.

VX (12): Look... I am a Black counsellor - every time I have a white client I am deskilled in my mind... [I ask myself] Does the client think I am as competent as a white counsellor?

This and other points relating to the black counsellor-white client dyad are outlined in Appendix 5.

Although some of the research participants described initial apprehension about working with white clients, most felt confident about it, and over twenty-five stated directly that this is what they had been trained for - to work with white clients. The interviewees were critical of the white western Eurocentric bias of their training experience. They were, however, in agreement that their training experiences in the classroom and in their practice placements did prepare them well for their work with white clients. Throughout the training period and beyond Black counsellors could observe, listen to and develop an understanding of the world view of the white person, at a micro level amongst their peers, and at a macro level by living in Britain. They also learned through their training about the variety of ways in which white people might apprehend them. As IK (78) reflected: 'working with white clients makes me challenge the stereotypes that I have of how white people are'. The training period provided useful experience for the Black counsellor in how to deal with some of the ways in which they are construed, as well as in learning about themselves and their responses to these constructions. IK, BR, AZ, LH, TZ and others within the research gave examples of the ways in which they had dealt with racist clients or ones that did not want to work with a Black counsellor.

Research participants also emphasised their need to raise the issue of difference at an early point with their clients (black and white) as an essential ingredient to building a safe and supportive relationship - e.g. MG 72 - 74:

> ...when I was counselling a white client [I] point out the obvious about our cultural differences bringing that out into the open at the beginning of a session. I found it enabled clients to be more free about what they spoke about...but you may also have the African Caribbean client who doesn't want an African Caribbean counsellor.

The research participants quoted examples of ways in white clients denied or avoided talking about ethnicity difference even when it was relevant to the issue they were bringing to counselling. VX described how despite his efforts his white client 'treats me as if I were a white counsellor'. MG recalls how she was not seen as a Black person but as MG (her name) by her client.

This refusal to acknowledge the difference between counsellor and client seems only to operate in one direction. Black counsellors and black clients are rarely, if ever, quoted as seeing their clients or counsellors only as their named selves.

By denying difference it is almost as if the white client or counsellor fears that to acknowledge difference problematises the relationship, sensing that acknowledging difference might lead to conflict rather than celebration; a phenomena discussed by Moodley and Dhingra (1998) in their work on white client - black counsellor relationships.

In his interview for this research JJ described an initial session with a white client which had ended abruptly. He surmised that if he were white his interpretation of this abrupt ending may have been located in the relationship or his client's perception of his competence. However, being a Black counsellor, there was an added dimension. Could his client have left the session because he did not want to work with a Black counsellor? As shown below, his speculations occupied a significant amount of energy and he took this issue to supervision for further exploration.

JJ (32): ...last week I had a client who came for the first time, a white man who left after twenty minutes and he said that he felt that it was early in the morning, it was 10.30 ...He'd been for therapy before about five years ago and I asked him whether I was not what he was expecting and he said there was no issue there, it just isn't the time so he didn't want to continue...

VW (33): What did you think about that?

JJ (34): Whether he had a problem with me being Black? He left after twenty minutes and spoke to the receptionist and asked to arrange for him to see somebody after the next day and as it happened I actually bumped into [the manager of the counselling service] and told [the manager] about it. It threw me completely. The manager...suggested that I might write a letter to him but [the manager] said it was obviously better to speak to my supervisor about it and I suppose the

> whole thing really bothered me. So I think that's really bothered me, it may well be nothing to do with the colour of my skin but it may well have been. There's no way of knowing...

It is worth noting here that the client who left so abruptly had been on a waiting list to see a counsellor for at least four months. His hasty departure may have been as a result of emotional turmoil on the day, or his initial contact, person to person with JJ as counsellor, rather than in response to the ethnicity of his assigned counsellor. This incident took place in a city with a high density black population. Furthermore the client left the session and immediately tried to book another counselling session with another counsellor, not with JJ. He could have made this arrangement to see JJ at another time, as explained in the counselling organisation's information leaflet.

JJ speculated that his blackness was a factor in his client's decision and behaviour. His client's further actions add weight to his supposition. The response of his manager was not what he had expected. The manager's suggestions that he could write a letter and talk it over with his supervisor were not very helpful to him. JJ was challenged by a number of issues and questions. He wondered aloud what he could say in his letter to this very temporary client that would not sound inappropriate given their brief contact. Another question he asked was whether it is appropriate for the counsellor to challenge the perceived racial discrimination of his client at such an early a stage. What, he asked, if the client just felt uncomfortable with JJ, and his reaction was personal rather than based on racial grounds? What was the counselling organisation's policy on client counsellor allocation, and what could be done about clients who discriminated against counsellors on racial grounds? By allowing his client to see another counsellor could the organisation be supporting institutional racism?

JJ recognised that it would be difficult to prove that this incident was one which was categorically about 'race'. A continuous challenge that Black counsellors face is discerning whether their ethnicity is a delimiting or negative factor in the counsellor client relationship.

JJ also explored the quality of support he received from his manager and supervisor and the fact that his 'confidence as a counsellor had been thrown' by this event. When asked whether he thought a white counsellor might have a similar reaction to him if a black client had left abruptly, JJ responded:

> ...I'm not sure whether it would affect them in the same way. I'm not sure they would readily see it as because of them being white.
>
> (75)

JJ's response illustrated his perceptions of the impact of black-white relations that might exist between counsellor and client. JJ sensed that his client's rejection of him as a counsellor might be connected to his being black. JJ asserted that he was familiar with this reaction from white people in his work, but that this was countered by the seniority of his position in his profession and the supportive systems inherent in that profession.

Fanon's conclusion (1967) that Blacks need to be alert to the potential for ambiguity in black-white communication is referred to earlier in this thesis. An inference that can be drawn from Fanon's work is that a white counsellor may not even register their whiteness as a factor in a black client's early rejection of them, and that this is indicative of their position of power and their confidence as practitioners. From a white counsellor's perspective the client's negative reaction is to do with the client and not as a result of their instant response to the ethnicity of the counsellor.

WW reported a similar incident of client rejection when she described how a 'mixed-race' (mixed parentage) client accompanied by her white mother attended for her first session of counselling.

WW (130): ...her mother actually said "Are you the counsellor?" and I went "yes". and she said "oh right" and "oh right" was like - I didn't know you would be Black ... it was there and her daughter was like ooh...Her mother said "Well she can't stay long" and I knew she wasn't coming back although her daughter was like ok.

VW (131): What was that about then?

WW (132): I don't know... Fear...she probably doesn't want to see me in case I turn her daughter more ethnic.

In this example, a white mother makes a decision for her daughter which is based on the ethnicity of the counsellor. The conclusion by the Black counsellor may well have been based on their training experience based on the initial responses of white peers to having a Black trainee in their midst. In this way, the Black counsellor experiences the impact of client rejection in training and at an early stage.

White counsellor avoidance or rejection

There are many ways in which the white counsellor can exert their power of choice by rejection. The white counsellor can choose not to work with a black client, in subtle or more direct ways. For example, by indicating that a relationship with the counsellor would not be conducive or beneficial to the client or by diagnosis suggesting that the client needs more specialised help. The white counsellor could assess that the client is not 'ready for counselling' because they cannot easily form a relationship with them. The white counsellor could choose not to work in an area where black people live who might have access to counselling (Dhingra and Saxton 2004).

Black counsellor persistence

The same 'choices' of client base are not available to the Black counsellor in their work. There are more white people accessing counselling services in the voluntary, statutory and independent sector than black people. Black counselling practitioners are more likely to encounter white clients unless they are able to find specialised services offering counselling to minority ethnic clients in their area.

This research found that Black trainee counsellors were likely to persevere with clients with whom they were having a difficult relationship for two reasons. Firstly, although they may recognise or assess that the white client's resistance or difficulties in the relationship is connected 'race' or 'covert racism' they may choose not to address this with the client out of anxiety or fear of alienating them. Secondly, the research participants described their desire to appear competent and capable. It was important to prove themselves as competent and worthy to white clients and their peers, for course assessment outcomes and long term employment prospects may depend on it. The Black counsellors interviewed saw the difficulties they experienced as a challenge or obstacle that they needed to overcome. Some of these conclusions could also be due to the influence of the counsellor's orientation or approach to counselling. For example, LO, a research participant who completed her training in the Psychodynamic approach, stated that Psychodynamic Theory encouraged her to view the client's experience of racism as evidence of their poor upbringing and lack of self esteem. Indeed, classic Psychodynamic Theory does not recognise the impact of racism as a phenomenon in the counselling relationship (Ivey et al. 1997; Tuckwell 2002). As illustrated before, it is difficult to prove or disprove

that 'race' has a dimension in the counselling relationship unless it is actually openly declared by both parties involved.

Black counsellors, unlike their white counterparts, as trainees and qualified practitioners require a significant amount of incontrovertible evidence before they might reach an assessment that the white client is not 'ready for counselling'.

Black trainee counsellors are less likely to encounter large numbers of black clients for whom similar assessment may apply. Although they may be over-represented in mental health services currently, black people do not access counselling services in similar numbers. The Black counsellor who chooses to work with black clients only may struggle to find long-term permanent employment, as a large number of counselling services available for minority ethnic clients are usually projects with time-limited funding which do not usually allow for long-term development.

The White trainer-Black trainee dyad

One way of exploring the Black trainee-white trainer relationship may be to consider the implications of the white-black dyad as it might be in the counsellor-client relationship.

As with that relationship, the black-white dyad is a re-enactment of other social scenarios. The power and authority resting with the trainer, the black counselling trainee mindful of this may be anxious about assessment. It is likely that trust between trainee and trainer may be fragile; this may be shown by the trainee's reticence and, in many cases, silence. The trainee may decide that the environment is unsafe, so unsafe that they end their training prematurely. The trainee may conclude that the only way to survive is to be more like their white peers.

Meanwhile, the white trainer may be puzzled or frustrated by the trainee's reticence and silence. The white trainer may have low or high expectations of the Black trainee. The trainer may use a form of linguistic racism to distance themselves from the issues and the Black trainee, and view the trainee as hard work. The racial identity development of the counselling trainer and trainee are likely to be at a different stages/status (Helms1995) and this might bring about a clash of agendas and expectations. It is unlikely that the trainer will be able to recognise the internalised racism of the Black trainee and its consequent behaviours in the Black trainees present in their groups.

Black counsellor-black client dyad

All of the research participants admitted to feelings of nervousness and anxiety at the prospect of working with black clients. One interviewee, NF, who had not worked with a black client, stated she preferred to work with white clients as she was 'more used to them'. Ironically, NF said that she was unsure how she would deal with 'race' and culture when working with a black client and did not take into account the impact of her ethnicity in her counselling relationships with white clients. During her three years of training no reference to this dimension had been made, nor did she consider its absence as a deficit.

Research participants referred to their knowledge of the indifferent mental health care services available for black clients, which took little account of the special needs of black clients, possibly leading to an exacerbation of their problems with living. They also assumed that black clients were likely to have experienced racism at some point in their lives, and that this experience would feature in the discussions between counsellor and client to some degree. These responses are supported by the work, experience and research findings of Carter (1995), CRE (2001), Fernando (1991), McInnis (2002), and others referred to in earlier chapters of this work.

In contrast to their work with white clients, few of the Black counsellors interviewed felt equipped by their training to counsel black clients, and sixteen of the counsellors pursued training courses which addressed issues of 'race' and culture in depth during their initial training and post-qualification. Although most were pleased to be doing so, their pleasure was affected by feelings of inadequacy and a concern to 'get it right' for their black clients. Their rationale for anxiety was often based on an appreciation (from their own experience) of the risk the black client has taken to seek counselling.

MN (56): It took further training and confidence and understanding to begin work with black clients.

Another counsellor recalls:

LH (46): …when I first had a Black client, I thought - what am I doing? I don't know enough, and actually my [trainer] was quite upset with me that I went out and sought training to deal with specifically 'race' and culture. [My trainer] was feeling that they hadn't given me enough, which they hadn't and you just have to accept that.

It is possible that her white peer faced, with a black client, may have had similar apprehensions. It is not clear from the data collected what the Black counsellors learned on these supplementary courses that made them feel more confident and competent to work with black clients. One factor may have been that working with black clients was central in the discussion work of the training rather than an afterthought or an addition included at the insistence of a lone Black counselling trainee. Whilst involved in this kind of training, the Black counsellors who participated in this research stated that they could then truly be a trainee rather than an expert witness or a learning resource for his or her peers. As trainees, they were being asked to respond to case study material and issues in their capacity as counsellors and individuals providing them with the safety of professional emotional distance, and, if they chose to use it, the benefit of their lived experience. Furthermore, the course facilitators who convened the training had control of the agenda and were responsible for raising the issues and identifying racism and areas of difficulty for the trainees as a group. Also, all the trainees present would have had a specific interest in counselling work with black clients.

From her experience of working with black clients, LH concluded that the need in black clients for acceptance and care from their counsellor is similar to that expressed by white clients, but that the intensity of feeling expressed is 'ten times' greater.

In the following research transcript extract UY describes the depth of feeling she notices and the difference she experiences in her counselling relationships with black clients.

UY (11): When I'm in a room with a Black woman I am a different being... My emotions are much much deeper. I seem to be a different person... The feelings are different. I don't know whether it's a connection. There's something different... I can't describe it.

For ZT, the impact of her training in Black therapy has affected the way that she works with all clients and supervisees. She also referred to a different dimension in her work with black clients and supervisees.

ZT (50): …the difference is that I connect with them as Black people acknowledging their experience as a Black person, acknowledging what it is for them to be a Black woman here in this environment...

WW expressed a wish to work with a Black therapist. During the research interview she was invited to consider what a Black therapist could offer, and described what she anticipated as follows:

WW (126): …it's like not having to kind of explain in very intricate details my experience of being a minority on a course, getting a level of understanding there. Feeling that there's some kind of awareness around my experience.

As with all clients, acknowledgement, acceptance and empathic understanding are important elements of effective work with black clients. There is also a spiritual dimension referred to in the two extracts above which suggests that the connection between the Black counsellor and client is profound, and that this depth of feeling and connection has to be re-discovered either through additional and specific training and or through a meditative re-connection with their cultural identity, some of which they have to put to one side whilst training amongst white peers and trainers who are less able to understand this perspective. The research data indicates that a holistic view of black clients by Black counsellors took into account their heritage and their current environment and experience. The relationship between the Black counsellor and her exclusively female client was not the focus of the research, yet in some ways the Black counsellor-Black counsellor researcher relationship echoed some of this. Some of the response of the research participants included their reflections on their heritage, environment and experience.

GT contended that her post-qualification training and personal reflections had validated her work with black clients in a way that could not be easily described, as is shown below.

GT (56): …I've got a Black female client who I've worked with for about four years and has been quite isolated and I was talking about her with my supervisor and I said the words "I felt instinctively" and she said "instinctively - you mean intuitively?" And I said "Oh yes intuitively".

Her attendance at a conference on Black mental health a fortnight later clarified her thinking and confirmed for her that 'instinctively' was the right word and best described her work with the black client. GT continued:

> 'I do feel that my work with black clients is often very instinctive in that I am picking up the needs and have the understanding of the kind of background and what are the gaps. And for this girl, it was about gaps…I kind of knew what the things were that she was missing that wouldn't have been evident… I didn't think to a white therapist because they wouldn't have the same background.'
>
> (56)

GT's initial counselling training experience was not directly helpful to her in her work with this black client. However, her further training experience re-affirmed her belief and enabled her to reclaim her word from intuitive to instinctive. A dictionary definition implies that the words are similar. Being intuitive is to do with thinking and insight, whereas instinctive is linked to the innate, spontaneity, something that is outside the control of thinking.

When asked whether she thought that similar gaps in her understanding could be identified in her work with white clients, GT conceded that this was probably true but there would be fewer because she had 'grown up and worked in a white society'. Also, that all of her work was trans-cultural whereas this was a small fraction of a white therapist's work.

This extract and discussion presupposes that a white counsellor would not be able to identify the needs of the black client mentioned, no matter how much training they had or the quality of that training. This essentialist argument could be expanded further to suggest that white counsellors also had the potential for developing a special understanding of white clients that Black counsellors could not replicate or approach. Such arguments contribute to the continued debate about the questionable advantages and disadvantages of ethnic matching of client and counsellor, exemplified in the work of Alladin (1993), Smith (1987), Ridley (1995) and others. A salient point emerging from these debates rests on the cultural competence of the counsellor and their ability to recognise and understand such dimensions as internalised oppression, racial identity development in themselves as practitioners, in the client, and in the counsellor-client relationship.

The arguments for ethnic matching are in some ways persuasive, given the current climate of racism and institutional racism. There is comfort in being surrounded by the familiar, in terms of culture; this is one reason why specialised counselling services are established, providing counsellors who are trained in and aware of the issues relevant to that counselling group.

Some black clients could seek out the services of Black counsellors whom they could assume to be more willing and able to assist in the exploration of their issues in context. However, there are black clients who do not identify as Black or even see the relevance of their ethnicity to any issue that they choose to bring to counselling - for them, ethnic matching might be nonsense.

Also, some black clients express a preference for working with a white counsellor in order to ensure their confidentiality is maintained within a small black community. In these cases, there is a lack of trust in the Black counsellor's ability to keep matters discussed confidential. Virdee (2004) showed that some Asian clients did not believe that a Black counsellor was capable of this, despite their training. For other clients their specific choice to work with a white counsellor may be because they self-assess that their issues are to do with relationships with white people, or that they are affected by the factors outlined in the black-white dyad, (see Appendix 5).

Apart from being impractical, ethnic matching may deny true acknowledgement of cultural diversity and difference evident amongst individuals who share similar or the same ethnicity but who may be for instance at different stages of racial identity development. An extreme logic of ethnic matching could lead to further marginalisation of black clients and services which could, in the longer term, affect the quality of service provision available.

Already, counselling services for minority and minority ethnic groups tend to be under-resourced and available only as part of short term projects which require extensive fund-raising to remain viable.

It could be that in their training Black counsellors are rarely, if at all, given the opportunity to explore this notion, because of their particular isolated circumstances. Most counsellors accepted that they did not assume that they had special skills or rights to work with black clients, but referred to their affinity and empathy for the black clients they encountered or hoped to encounter.

This is well illustrated by the account given by MG of a case study that she presented to her peers (all white) in one of their training sessions. The group listened to a taped

counselling session with a black client and commented on the counsellor, client and relationship:

MG (48): ...one of the counsellors said "I couldn't have done that, I couldn't have counselled her"... She said she found it sort of scary and I said this was a Black woman and she was being a Black woman, I didn't feel threatened by her in any way, she was very tactile, us Afro Caribbeans we're very tactile, and this woman in a session if she found something funny etc., and I said I admired that... They [white peers] said that she sounded quite aggressive and I thought well that's a stereotypical view really on Afro Caribbeans being loud and aggressive etc...

The ability of the Black counsellor to see beyond the apparent 'noisy' behaviour of the black client is a factor that Gowrisunkur (2002) refers to in her case study working successfully with an Asian man whom her white colleagues had assessed as not suitable for counselling because of his challenging behaviour.

MG's white peers were given direct experience of a Black counsellor working with a white client, and, as indicated above, their response to this client might have been different. Setting aside that the white counsellor trainees did not have direct contact with this client and were responding to an audio tape in an artificial environment, there is still the issue of general agreement amongst MG's peers of their perception of the client sounding "scary", "quite aggressive". One counsellor said that she could not have counselled this client. This highlights questions about what she would do with the client if this situation arose in her practice. Would the client be assessed as 'not ready for counselling', for instance?

It is also noticeable that MG complains about the stereotyping of Afro Caribbeans as being loud and aggressive, and yet she explained her client's tactile behaviour as typically Afro Caribbean to a group of impressionable white counsellors.

Another example illustrating the importance of the way in which a Black counsellor might be more attuned to the needs of the black client through cultural empathy was given by UY in her work with an African client. UY's knowledge of the language, her respect for the social mores, and her understanding of the need to source the food that her client ate, enabled her to establish a good working relationship with her client, who had previously worked unsuccessfully with a white counsellor.

FU and JQ described how rôle play scenarios used in their separate trainings highlighted a case study scenario involving a black client, in which a counsellor advised a client to be more assertive when they complained about the pressure of entertaining numerous social visitors. In the research interview, FU and JQ explained how this encouragement was inappropriate, and did not take into account the importance of cultural tradition for the client. These examples illustrate how the focus in training on the theoretical counselling approach can lead to ignoring cultural differences.

The training experience highlighted the need to explore other ways of working with all clients and in particular with black clients.

For some, this meant using and adapting the counselling approach they had been trained in to meet the needs of their clients. For others it meant exploring other ways of working, for instance African-centred approaches, Black therapy, making more use of the client and counsellor's understanding of their spirituality or exploring their faith and beliefs. These ideas, whilst on the fringes of much of current counselling training curriculum content, seemed to occupy more of a central interest in the pre-occupations of the Black counsellors interviewed. Where possible and appropriate, some of the Black counsellors have been able to offer counselling in the mother-tongue languages of their clients and in different settings not based on the more traditional one client one counsellor one room scenario.

New ways of working with black clients

DW (19): The way I work with (my) people does not fit into a model and I wouldn't be considered authentic.

DW has developed ways of working with black clients which draw on her own ideas about the needs of black clients, and is by all accounts and client evaluations an extremely successful counsellor. In her interview for the research she recognized the value of her training and has adapted the ideas from that training rather than working from one identifiable counselling orientation. One research participant compared the training in her Middle Eastern country of origin with that available in the United Kingdom. She noted that her training was more community and family based and that there was less emphasis placed on confidentiality.

KI, an experienced counsellor, who works in a student counselling service and for a local authority, expressed her doubts about the white counsellors trained in one

approach who had not explored 'race' and culture. She was concerned about how this might disadvantage black clients:

KI (26): ...they've not done the work a lot of them and they they need to do the work.

KI agreed that this assessment could also apply to Black counsellors who have received the same training, but was adamant that the gap in knowledge and understanding was bigger for white students:

KI (28): ...because they [white people] can go through most of their life without giving the issue a moment's thought...Whereas most Black people in this country in this society will have had to have thought about how they communicate, how they interact with white people because they just wouldn't survive if they didn't think about those things.

One research participant, JQ, took doubtful comfort from her observations that her white trainee peers were not likely to counsel black people because her peers were middle class lawyers, doctors and so on, and would not work in areas with a significant black population. This is an unrealistic view which does not take into account the needs of the black middle class population. Another Black counsellor, EV, described how she was criticised by Black trainee counsellors pursuing their studies in Black therapy who assessed her willingness to train in a westernised counselling approach as evidence that she was 'not Black enough'.

EV gave examples of different and difficult counselling relationships with black clients. She recalled how in her work with one black client she revealed her dislike for black people in general (an example of internalised oppression as referred to by Rose (1997)) and women in particular; another black client, who was also a counselling trainee, was unwilling and unable to trust EV. EV described how another of her clients was 'very much ahead of her in terms of her understanding of the impact of racism'.

EV's experience is indicative of the ways in which the content of the Black counsellor's training can affect her ability to explore the impact of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship and highlights the need for her to be supported and supervised by trainers, supervisors and peers who are aware of the issues that might arise for the Black counsellor and black client. EV stated that on her most recent

training course she received excellent support in these matters from a white trainer and white supervisor, both of whom she described as being 'culturally aware'. However, DW shares KI's concern:

DW (25): I question what goes on in their [white counsellors'] rooms when they counsel Black people.

DW's interest in what white counsellors are doing when working with black clients presents a shift in focus from black client as 'other' to the white counsellor as being 'other' in the relationship. This foreshadows some aspects of training opportunities for white counsellors to explore their whiteness, and the work published by Tuckwell in 2002.

The Impact of Counselling Training on Black counsellors

a) As individuals

In the course of interviewing Black counsellors about their training experiences, words and images associated with survival were a consistent feature in the majority of the interviews.

They referred to keeping safe, conserving energy, and disguising or hiding their true selves. In the process of surviving they also discovered how they are seen by others and realised their need to seek support and further training. The counsellors described the ways in which they were challenging stereotypes and outlined goals and plans for the future.

Taking the amount of these survival images out of context could give the impression that the research participants saw themselves as victims or quarry, subject to likely attack. This would be a rather extreme interpretation. The Black counsellors interviewed showed signs of being cautious but not fearful, and were in most instances keen to continue their work using the skills of counselling. One interpretation that can be made of this use of imagery is that the training experience had heightened their sense of being under attack and that the in-depth self-exploration involved had challenged aspects of their existence. The counsellors' emergence from their training had tested their survival skills. The research participants had to learn about themselves and how to deal with the pressures of being in the minority without access to 'cover'. There was no cover, nowhere to hide, because they were not white.

Keeping safe

Counselling training involves exploring and supporting vulnerability in the counsellor and the client: being vulnerable and in the minority led to research participants feeling unsafe and uncomfortable. As YU explains:

YU (14): I decided not to talk about 'race' - for my own safety.

LH knew the importance of keeping herself safe whilst in training but this was not easy to do:

LH (10): ...it was difficult because of a lifetime of having to keep yourself safe by being quiet and not sharing too much of yourself [becoming] exposed and vulnerable ...there was this conflict of wanting to keep yourself safe. if you're silent then you're safe...knowing that in order to get through the course you're going to have to share a bit of what's going on.

Describing herself as a 'survivor of counselling training', OE expanded on this:

OE (35): It has been a nightmare, the course that I've been on. I was there as a token Black. If I had a view or opinion it wasn't accepted...it is like times of slavery... I felt as if I was being squashed. A flower... pulling the petals off. If it wasn't for my therapy I would have collapsed... It was just a horrible, horrible, horrible experience.

The research participants frequently referred to the energy involved in being in a minority. They talked of the need to be alert to the raising of 'race' and culture issues, of being aware of group dynamics and the energy involved in educating others.

Conserving energy

Referring to racist remarks and challenges made to her about her competence as a lecturer and a counsellor, EV declared:

EV (32): There are times when I will pursue and there are times when I won't.

IR, referring to her fraught relationships with peers on her training course, notes:

IR (18): They[white peers] take a long time to mix with you but are quick to dismiss you. It's very painful. I withdrew went into myself. I stopped making an effort. I decided I can't fight with twenty people. I decided

let's get the training and get out of here. Exit rather than process.

ZT echoes this experience:

ZT (24): …it took an immense amount of energy for me to actually be there and to be the only Black woman in there and be myself in there in terms of not to be guarded, to be defensive.

LO pointed to her mental exhaustion with being the holder of responsibility for raising issues of 'race' and culture:

LO (22): …when I raised these issues I used to be the first one ...and there came a point when I thought I haven't got the energy for all this or actually, I'm choosing not to use my energy to educate everybody here.

Similarly, BR registers her resolve to be indifferent:

BR (21): You could pick the tutors up every two minutes but I couldn't be bothered.

RB described how she withdrew from the activities of the training group in response to their failure to acknowledge her ethnicity, her input and her needs as a Black counsellor.

RB (47): I'm always performing at fifty per cent instead of one hundred per cent because I'm not being challenged.

Other examples from GT and LH illustrate a similar view:

GT (21): Not diving in and educating… dealing with some things but not everything.

LH (14): …with the second lot of training I knew I would have to dig deeper. [I] didn't want to be the teacher …it's up to people to do their own digging and their own burying.

Forming alliances and keeping quiet

One common strategy employed by the Black counsellors in this research was to withdraw into silence and use the silence to tune out or meditate and observe group dynamics, as described by WW and VX.

LH (14): …racism - I mean that's a constant thing that people have to deal with in their own way and my way was to shut down and be silent but then we'd get into all these discussions about my impact on the group and how

> they were experiencing my silence and how powerful it's been and things like that and it suddenly occurred to me that we weren't talking about their part in it.

Another strategy used when there were two or more trainee Black counsellors in a group was to agree share the responsibility of dealing with racism and race issues as they emerged in training sessions. Counsellors described how they reached tacit agreements with their Black peers and used non-verbal communication to allocate responsibilities for challenging stereotype views or racism. Black counsellors also reported forming similar alliances and agreements with trainees such as gay or lesbian trainees who identified as part of other minority groups.

Sometimes, Black counsellors received unsolicited support from their peers:

LO (30): > ...I was challenging something with the tutor and she couldn't handle what I was raising. A couple of students spoke up and did say that if they were the Black student they would probably have left the course.

Use of silence

The use of silence in the counselling relationship is theorised and experienced as a period during which counsellor and client communicate or meditate on their inner worlds and outer connections. The Black counsellors' silence in the training group was seen as 'powerful', and, quite often, 'threatening'. The research findings show how Black counsellors in their silence were often imbued with special powers by their white peers, so that when they did speak it was deemed to have deep and special significance. As a consequence they were often praised for their contributions by tutors and white peers alike, much to their irritation. As AS (124) described succinctly, 'my silences scream so I'm not invisible'.

The research findings also showed that Black counsellors often retreated into silence for safety or to render themselves invisible in the face of experienced racism or white peers' discomfort with their own racism. This silence could sometimes be interpreted as 'powerful', 'threatening', or, as KI (22) more worryingly suggests, as collusion or agreement by white peers and trainers. LH (18) talked of how she used silence to keep herself safe when she felt vulnerable. It was a way of defending herself from attack. As she explained:

LH (20): Sometimes some of [the] things they said were so outrageous I thought I'm just not going to get into this, so I would just keep quiet and then they'd say "we can see you're withdrawing".

Alleyne's research findings (2004) indicate that black workers perceived white people's silence as a means by which they were excluded or ignored in situations where words from them held the potential for support or decisive action. In this sense, words and speech are a source of power for the white person.

An alternative perspective announced by some counsellors interviewed was that their silence allowed them to safely explore their internal world without interference or judgement from their white peers, who would not understand anyway.

As JJ (61) said: You have to fight to keep your own (Black) perspective.

What silence might actually mean in the black-white dyad in counselling and other relationships is worth further and fuller exploration not within the compass of this research. Jones, (2001), reflects on similar experience as a student in Higher Education:

> 'I still burn with rage and shame at my inability to find my voice sufficiently to counter the arguments of some students in a class discussion on 'race''.
> (p.153)

Jones recalls how she 'silenced' herself and made herself invisible as a survival strategy in order to achieve her degree, but wonders about the personal cost to herself:

> 'I would learn not to speak out, not to make awkward statements or ask potentially dangerous questions, or say anything that could be perceived as antagonistic.'
> (p.156)

This use of silence does highlight an important aspect of the counsellor-client relationship, questioning how the learning from the training experience might transfer itself to the counsellor-client relationship. An important area to explore could be to discover if a Black counsellor was more likely to retreat into silence when feeling vulnerable working with a white client. How might

this be understood by the client? Is a white counsellor likely to misinterpret a black client's silence? What might this suggest about the misreading of non-verbal cues? Furthermore, how and whether these interactions are recognised and explored in effective supervision. These questions or enquiries amplify the need to comprehend the impact of internalised oppression on the black counsellor and black client.

In a recent tutors' group training workshop in which there had been a lengthy silence I was asked to speak by a colleague, because she was concerned that I was silent and had not spoken in the group. This was pursued further by the participant and later by the facilitator. It emerged that my silence concerned my colleague in ways that were connected to my 'presence' as a black group participant and in my rôle as a senior colleague. My colleague was reminded by others in the group that at least three group members had not spoken and that their lack of contribution had gone unnoticed and unchallenged.

Fanon (1967) describes his use of silence and desire for invisibility as a potential means of gaining acceptance:

> 'I slip into corners, and my long antennae pick up
> the catch-phrases strewn over the surface of things
> -nigger... I slip into corners, I remain silent, I strive
> for anonymity, for invisibility. Look, I will accept
> the lot, as long as no one notices me!'
> (p. 116)

Callender (1997) refers to research that has been completed on cultural differences in non-verbal communication as it relates to the education of black children, and the way this can affect the teacher-student relationship. It would seem some elements of this are relevant here. She has noted that little work has been done to investigate the impact of non-verbal communication in the education of black children in Britain from anything other than a white perspective. She observes that the body language of black children has often been negatively perceived and has played a part in their expulsion or exclusion from school. She maintains that an understanding of the use of non-verbal communication in Black communication is crucial in the education of black children. Although a small amount of counselling training material in video format has been produced in the past, more recently there has been a tendency to focus more on the spoken word. It is suggested here that further

exploration of the non-verbal communication in the black-white dyadic relationships present in counselling would be informative and useful as a part of counsellor training.

These research findings showed that silent communication amongst themselves which white trainers and peers seemed to be unaware of was often used by Black counsellor trainees when in a training group. Black trainees talked about taking their cue to speak from each other non-verbally. The maintenance of a studied forbearance or rebellion as a group could also be established in this way, thus affecting interpersonal relationships with peers and tutors.

ZT explained how, after extensive research, she found and participated in training which specifically addressed Black therapy issues and the needs of black clients, which enabled her to look at many of the issues described above in a different way, finding also that her silences were creative and engaged in what she called 'her spiritual energies'. She recalled that, unlike in her previous training (as the only black trainee), she did not feel the need to resort to silence as a refuge and was quite vocal throughout the two year period. Moreover, she was aware that her Black peers could 'read' her silences with ease and so could not hide even if she wanted to.

The research findings have implications for the eventual practice of the Black counsellor and their relationships with clients black or white when they feel under threat. This raises questions about the authenticity of the Black counsellor and their habitual presenting of another self for safety reasons, a strategy described by Uwahemu (2004). If there is a climate of anxiety and a need to hide who you are and what you feel for fear of being judged or negatively assessed, this raises a general question about the facilitation and safety of the training environment for black or white students.

Angry or quiet? scary, invisible or visible?

The research evidence seemed to point to two options available to the Black counsellor when interacting with their peers in discussions. It seems that they were quiet, when they were not raising awareness about issues of 'race' and culture, and angry when they were. This limited two-dimensional description seemed to be the world that most of the counsellors interviewed inhabited whilst training, which did not apply to their abilities as counsellors. Most of

the interviewees commented on the sense of isolation and the loneliness of their training experience as a major factor in their decision to seek external training support. Research participants mentioned that this was at times questioned by their white peers. In trying to find a Black supervisor YU was asked if she was 'prejudiced' against white people.

What Black counsellors discovered in their training was that their frame of reference was often so different to that of their white peers that they were often led to question its validity. This could be seen in their interpretations of scenarios presented to them for discussion in training sessions, in their art work produced to symbolise self, feelings and thoughts, and in their different understanding of their relationships with clients. For the Black counsellor, the unwanted visibility that arose when matters of 'race' and culture were being discussed or a workshop was planned was a seen as a threat. For example, in one of her training sessions, NF was given some scenarios that involved working with clients with different concerns. She recalls that amongst the clients there was an Irishman named Jack, an Englishwoman named Mary and a Black woman. NF stated that none of her peers noted that the Black woman was not named. Although she queried this, the matter was not explained or pursued by her tutors. NF was left to conclude that 'Black woman' was a generic and sufficient label, (her name NF's) and that of this client was not important.

TZ's representation of herself as a Black rock had sinister interpretations for her white peers:

> TZ (19): ...I had drawn a Black rock. For me it was a very good very positive kind of rock...People found it scary and wondered what it was all about.

These responses propelled her into taking steps to find out more about inter-cultural therapy and to seek out additional training opportunities.

Participants in this research asserted that issues of 'race' and culture in training tended to focus on Black as 'Other', and that this is a source of threat for the trainee Black counsellor. Their experience told them that whiteness and white racial identity would be assumed as a given, and that the Black identity of the client would be scrutinised and more than likely misrepresented in the training environment. The fact that issues of race and

culture were often covered as a topic in a few hours is dismissive of the black client and counsellor's experience, but in the interviewees' experience was often seen as a blessing for the beleaguered Black trainee counsellor.

Learning about how Black people are seen

In all of the interviews, research participants described how important it was to them to preserve their racial identity in their training group. It was as if this precious commodity would be endangered if shared with their trainers and peers. For some research participants, they learned at an earlier stage in their lives and in their training that white people in a group can be dangerous, either from their own experience or observations. There was some sense that they could easily be 'turned upon' by the majority training group and that it was important for them to remain alert and separate, only revealing a small amount of themselves as required by the demands of the course.

In many ways the reports of their training experiences justifies their cautious attitude.

The fear of being absorbed and stripped of their Black identity was a common feature of the interviews, as the example quoted here shows:

DW (26): They strip you...stripped of my identity,
breaking down the person to train them
but not putting them back together again.
There isn't the understanding of me as a
Black woman..

This image suggests a deliberate and violent act on the part of the counselling trainer, a view not shared by most of the research participants to the same degree, but one which is indicative of white domination, colonisation and suppression. It points to the historical legacy of black-white relations and how this has an impact on the Black trainee counsellor and implications for the white trainee and trainer. Other participants talked of struggling to retain a Black perspective. They talked of struggling not to be moulded into the image of their trainer or trainee group or the stereotype of the white counsellor. Also expressed was the anxiety of being misunderstood. Phrases such as 'What does he/she mean?' and 'What is she saying?' are frequently mentioned in the interviews as responses from trainers and trainees to the Black counsellor's contributions to discussion about a range of issues.

If the Black counsellors could not assume that their peers and trainers could understand their words it might be reasonable to conclude that they would not understand them as people. This and other observed evidence of the way in which they are perceived by white people may have led the Black participants to air their suspicions about their white peers' abilities to effectively counsel Black people.

The myth of equality in training

Research participants also discovered that despite the declared principles of equality existing in their courses they might still not be seen as equal to their white peers.

HS was shocked to discover that some of her peers expressed their rivalry openly and subtly, reporting on one peer's statement that:

HS (35): You will pass this course, you are a statistic from an ethnic minority.

HS, DW and others commented on how their white peers were accommodating towards them as long as they remained in a less powerful position. When HS talked to her peers about her professional status she became aware that:

HS (41): These people were not able to accept me as a colleague. When I could be seen as a victim and empathised with everything was fine.

DW's analysis of the tensions present in the power relations between the Black trainee counsellor and white her peers was shared by many of the research participants:

DW (20): ...It's the simple fact that I'm not the Black client. It's not more complex than that.

The impact of the training experience on the Black counsellor professionally and as an individual may lead them to the conclusion that the rhetoric of equality, respect and empathy does not apply to them and probably does not apply to black clients unless they adopt a subservient or weaker position in relation to the white counsellor.

It is not difficult to understand how the trainee Black counsellor can arrive at such a conclusion when they hear such phrases and statements as the following go unchallenged by peers and tutors in the training environment:

'...I would not sell my house to a black person. I would not have a black person living next to me.'
'...Muslims are all terrorists aren't they?.'

The above phrases were quoted by the research participants as comments made by their peers. Dodd's report (2004) notes the expression of similar anti-black anti-Muslim statements in the population. Four trainee Black counsellors described how they were subjected to unhelpful and aggressive questioning from their peers and trainer following the deaths consequent to the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York on September 11th 2000. One counsellor talked of having to defend her religious faith, her clothing and other cultural traditions in the light of this event with her peer group.
JQ described how she emerged from being ignored to being different and guilty. She wondered how her peers might counsel a Muslim client given their expressions of open hostility. As researcher I wondered how she might counsel white clients whom she considered to be hostile to her. It did not seem that her training experience offered her an opportunity to explore her personal reactions to this hostility safely and, if appropriate, to challenge and or support her responses.

b) As professional practitioners

The research participants talked positively about their work with like-minded Black peers during and post qualification. This also extended to work with a Black therapist and/or supervisor. Those counsellors who were successful in their search for a Black therapist and/or supervisor expressed the relief of finding someone who understood them and/or their clients and were able to discuss and explore the impact of discrimination, racism, growing up and being Black in a white society. It is clear that they were not simply looking for a sympathetic ear or a chance to reminisce or participate in collusive activity. All of the counsellors who engaged the services of a Black counsellor and/or supervisor were seeking challenge, useful exploration and professional and personal development. This was not to deny, as TZ put it, that they had to get past the 'mutual admiring bit' or that they found some of their contact with a Black therapist or supervisor unsatisfactory. However, no contact established with a Black supervisor or therapist was reported as being abusive or dismissive of them as Black people.

The research evidence shows that the impact of their training experience had taught the Black counsellors to be wary and discerning. Their experiences had taught them about authentic and inauthentic relationships, and by a process of deduction they knew where their gaps were and how they might be filled.

Socio-political context

The socio-political context of their clients was recognised as a major concern of the research participants. This is at odds with the emphasis on the theoretical foundations of the counselling approaches taught on standard current counselling training courses. Whilst the UKCP and the BACP exhort the counsellor to take the context of the client into consideration, this tends to be less prominent as a feature of counselling training programmes.

However, the Black counselling practitioner working on a specialised project with a client group is faced with the reality of the client's context more than the independent practitioner or statutory provider.

In the case of the independent practitioner, he or she is likely to only come into contact with clients who are economically stable and relatively wealthy. The statutory provider of counselling may know of the client's condition, but is distanced from it as the client has usually been referred to the provider and is being supported by a range of statutory agencies. The Black counsellor working within a specialised project is likely to be working as a volunteer or sessional worker with clients who are usually socially excluded and almost certainly on a very low or no income.

The research evidence indicates that their training experience and the effect of being in the minority heightened their sensitivity towards black clients and other minority groups in the community. In addition, the research participants expressed a wish to change the circumstances of their clients. In some cases, this involved taking a more active part in their clients' lives. For instance, acting as advocate or mentor for their client, working closely with social services, education and other providers of support. The Black counsellors were also keen to be involved in the establishment of counselling services run for and by Black people and in promoting the potential of counselling generally.

The training experience had also convinced many Black counsellors that they needed to take an active part in the training of counsellors, so that their poor experiences would not be repeated. A 'responsibility to leave doors open' for future practitioners (RB) was an important consideration. All the counsellors interviewed anticipated newer and different challenges and struggles.
Many of the Black counsellors interviewed were involved in providing sessional training. Of the forty-four counsellors interviewed, twenty-eight were taking an active part in at least one of the following counselling related activities:

1. Visiting speaker input on issues of 'race' and culture for counselling courses at certificate and diploma level.
2. Teaching on certificate, diploma or post-graduate counselling courses.
3. Management/co-ordination of counselling services.
4. Clinical supervision of counsellors.
5. Involvement in the development of policies on equal opportunities and 'race' and culture within counselling organisations at a local and national level.
6. Raising awareness amongst peers (black and white) about the importance of acknowledging 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship. This includes raising this awareness across a broad spectrum of professions.
7. Attendance on further specialised training where 'race' and culture are addressed.
8. Publishing articles on the issue of 'race' and culture in the counselling relationship.

Professional responsibility Blackness and cultural awareness

In an interview, the Black actor Lennie James described how on arriving in England three things happened to his mother; she became Black, she became working class and she became West Indian. Previously she had known herself as a middle-class Trinidadian woman (Hattenstone 2003). Her new identity was assigned by others and her ethnicity became important. The writer Andrea Levy recounted a similar experience to Greer (2004). Her Jamaican parents were defined as black on their entry to England, and she was exhorted implicitly to '...keep her head down'.
It is likely that for the research participants in the counselling classroom their Black identity became very important and placed them on the outside of the majority white training group. The research evidence suggests that in some cases this identity was assigned by their white peers or that the Black trainee acknowledged this and acted

accordingly. Alred (1999) cites the account of a black trainee who experienced 'racial prejudice' in the training group thus:

> 'Becoming a counsellor was a potential challenge to my understanding of how I saw myself. I was fearful that becoming a counsellor might conflict with my blackness. I needed reassurance that becoming a counsellor would expand what it meant to be me – that I would experience a welcoming of diversity from the course community.'
>
> (p. 261)

The trainee later identified as 'a person of colour' (Helms 1995, and Appendix 4), which in his view accurately described his 'mixed heritage' and avoided the sense of divided loyalties and polarisation that is invoked with the black-white dyad analysis (Root 2000). By having a clearer sense of his own racial identity, the trainee concerned claimed that he was more authentic in his relationships with clients and more able to 'see clients as they are'.

A Black Counsellor first?

Question 17 of the interview schedule asked: Do you see yourself as a Black counsellor first? Invariably the answer from the participants was 'yes', with some qualification about gender on occasion. For instance, 'I see myself as a Black woman/man first' or, 'I see myself as a Black person'. One counsellor intriguingly responded:

AS (158): I feel white when with a white client and I feel like I'm a black counsellor when I'm with black people.

Three of the Black counsellors interviewed experienced question 17 as ambiguous, requiring further clarification from me. With one exception and little or no hesitation, all participants interviewed gave clear answers which affirmed their identification with Black identity, although this was not expanded upon. Thirty five of the participants appeared to smile enigmatically when asked the question. I noted that it was one of the questions that I chose to ask of each participant, which identified my own bias, agenda and curiosity. It seems from the research evidence that whether it is wished for or not, the counsellor's blackness is noticed by the client, by their peers and by the tutor, but may not be acknowledged.

As EV (109) stated: I have become more aware of what it means to be Black.

UY (7): When we actually touched and I mean

> touched the bit about culture and multi-cultural counselling issues I was aware of what I left behind in Somalia* as an African woman.
>
> * Name of (African) country changed to preserve interviewee confidentiality

The research participants were in agreement that although for some their Blackness was not an issue, it had become so because of their training experience.

The counselling training process, which insists on self-exploration, forces the Black counsellor who identifies as Black to explore what this means to them. For most of the counsellors interviewed this exploration was intensified by the negative and positive experiences in their training, their minority status in the training group and in UK society.

This insight into what it means to be Black is one that the Black counsellors wanted to share with others they came into contact with. This was extended to the way that they described themselves in counselling directories for potential clients. For example EV's national directory entry stated that she was a Black psychotherapist.

The Black Counsellor's expanded horizons

An outcome of successful completion of their counselling training for Black counsellors was the effect on their self-esteem. The Black counsellors recounted the difficult and enlightening experiences they had during their training and were able to reflect on how they had changed, and been involved in the change of others. Their determination to become counsellors had cost them dearly in some ways and they were able to acknowledge the changes within and outside of themselves. For example, some counsellors they were aware that their social status had changed and were unsure if the change was positive. KP's reaction is typical:

KP (54): I have changed... my language has changed. My mind has broadened... I have become middle class in my thinking... Education is a dangerous thing.

Conversely, VX expresses some doubt about the successful outcome of his training, arguing that the training experience has identified a continuous struggle and in some ways magnified it.

VX (11): My struggle has always been with power.

For MN, his counselling training experiences have given him the psychological vocabulary to describe and challenge the position of Black people. He explained his taciturn reaction at being asked to attend three rather than the normal two interviews for further psychoanalytical training thus:

MN (81 & 95): Because I have a job doesn't mean I'm not black anymore, because I drive a car or own my own home…throughout my training it's felt like my peers and tutors have wanted to say and have wanted me to believe that I'm the same and actually I'm not black, you just imagine you're black you're one of us. And my own need to be one of them, to be accepted as an equal is so great that I think I forget myself…but I have to be accepted for who I am and not what they want me to be…I'm living in a foreign land and the balance of power is so great that it has to be that way. I don't have to like it, I don't have to keep quiet about it and I don't have to accept it but I have to live with it.

The contrasting and mixed reactions of the Black counsellors quoted above are indicative of the sample interviewed. Some research participants described the inherent tensions in their acquired professional status as counsellors and the seductiveness of individualism, central to the philosophy and training methods of many counselling approaches, and the heritage pull of collectivism from their familial and cultural roots.

Significant training experiences for the Black Counsellor

The impact of the visiting Black tutor/speaker

The scenario described below is of the visiting tutor/speaker invited to present ideas on issues of 'race' and culture. All of the points made have emerged as research interview data and formed part of the phenomenological experience of the Black trainee counsellors included in this research. The implications and dynamics present in the Black-white, Black-Black dyads discussed in Chapter 3 and Appendices 4 & 5 are relevant here.

The indicators are that there are few Black practitioners available to provide training input on these matters. This might explain why established trainers tend to recruit their visiting speakers from graduates of their courses.

A speaker is invited to give a one-session workshop on issues of race and culture within the counselling relationship. By inviting the speaker there is an implicit

recognition of the speaker's experience and the need for specialist knowledge in this subject area. This raises the profile of the subject matter and the expectations of the training group. The visiting tutor providing input on 'race' and culture is usually Black, thereby reinforcing an idea that the Black counsellor is an expert and has responsibility for raising issues about 'race' and culture. It may also suggest that the Black counsellor only has expertise in this area of counselling work.

The Black visiting tutor is aware of the high expectations of the resident tutors and their trainees in their delivery of the input. White trainer and trainee knowledge and experience of the legacy and reputation of Racism Awareness Training events of the 1970s and early 1980s can lead to the visiting tutor being on the receiving end of defensive and often hostile behaviour, inducing feelings of shame and guilt, as referred to by Parker and Schwartz (2002). The Black visiting tutor is the messenger, but may also need to mediate and facilitate interpersonal conflicts that may arise (Housee 2001). They may need to deal with the insensitivity of white trainers and trainees in the presence of Black counselling trainees who are usually in the minority.

The Black trainee's response to the visiting speaker may evoke a complex combination of responses and factors. The Black trainee is likely to have high (and possibly higher) expectation of the visiting Black tutor than her white counterparts and in some ways anticipates shame if the Black trainer is not effective. Aware of the minority experience, the Black trainee is likely to exhibit protective behaviour towards the Black visiting speaker, denying or suppressing criticism or challenge of the speaker and the ideas they present. The reverse can also be true, with the Black trainee seeking to dislodge and discredit the visiting speaker. The need to be or appear perfect adds a further burden to the Black practitioner. This predicament is explored in the work of Fanon (1967) and Douglas' (1998).

My experience as visiting tutor providing input on 'race' and cultural issues has elicited all of the aforementioned responses from Black trainees.

The outcome from the visit and raising issues of 'race' and culture is that of any one-off visit. The input could have a long-term effect and inform the future behaviour and work of some or the participants, or its effect could be temporary and participants could satisfy themselves with having addressed the issues raised at least once.

The research participants attested to all of the above experiences and feeling along a continuum. The issues raised here could be broadened out and generalised to apply to any speaker/tutor presenting ideas on specialist subjects within counselling training.

The researcher's experience

As the research period progressed, I noted that the research interviews generated new targets, in addition to collecting and analysing the research data. It became apparent that successful pursuance of the qualitative interview method required the following presentational attributes. These could be divided into three broad categories: presentation of self as Black woman; presentation of Black professional self; and effective promotion of research purpose.

The perceived goals or targets of the interviewees were sometimes made explicit; they wanted to meet me and tell their story and they were investing in and trusting me as the researcher to document that experience sensitively. By their inclusion in the research the interviewees had some acknowledgement that theirs was a story worth telling.

It was obvious that the research participants were not, and could not be, as committed to the research as I was. In this sense as a researcher I was 'vulnerable', an attribute normally associated with the interviewee but, as Cotterill (1992) shows, equally applicable to the interviewer on a number of levels (p. 602). Cotterill gives personal examples of her vulnerability as researcher when encountering interviewee resistance. These were experienced by her, and expressed in the form of ageism, differing marital status, fertility, professional, class or economic status differentials. In addition, she identifies the vulnerability of the researcher who offers a contradictory interpretation of meanings derived from the data to the interpretation of the research participants who helped to create it. This aspect of researcher vulnerability persisted for me throughout the research process and to some extent halted my progress in proceeding with the 'writing up' of the research results. I wondered how the research participants would view the outcomes of this research and identify their contributions to it. Despite the care taken to anonymise the contributions made, I was aware that the Black counselling practitioner community is relatively small and those most vocal tend to be well known. In many ways my research mimicked the predicament of the black client approaching a black counsellor for help. It was possible that the client or research participant could be identified. McLeod (2001b) notes how the research participant is able to 'find' and

identify themselves by their quoted words in the research, no matter how well the researcher has disguised them or protected their confidentiality.

Throughout the data collection period all of the participants expressed their approval of the research I was undertaking. To some extent this 'blessing' also placed a small burden of responsibility on me to 'get it right' and do justice to their stories (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). The trust invested in me by many of the participants and the potential for them to assume that my analysis of the data would accord entirely with their viewpoints presented me with a challenge and some ethical concerns. My use of the British Educational Research Association (1992) and BACP (2001) guidelines on ethical research practice encouraged me to inform and prepare research participants for potential disappointment or their perception of inaccuracy in my analysis of or commentary on their contribution to the research.

Similar themes

Through the process of data collection for this research, coming into contact with other Black counsellors in the England, I discovered that in many cases their experiences and their working environments were not dissimilar to mine. I was repeatedly hearing 'my story' but with slightly different points of emphasis. The research participants' experiences were also echoing the limited literature available on the subject. Through the research interviews I was learning more about the counselling training process and about the work experiences of Black professionals in cities and towns in the heart of England.

I was able to make contact with other Black counsellors to a limited extent recognising the need for boundaries and ethical practice whilst being an insider researcher. There have been a few examples of what King (1997) describes as 'reciprocity' where I or the research participant could assist or provide information helpful to the other. Usually, this has meant finding other counselling organisations that are sympathetic to the needs of black clients or supporting information about relevant courses or conferences. Occasionally this reciprocity has involved temporary mentoring or counselling supervision work post research interview. Counselling is a marginal activity and being a Black counsellor often means being placed even further on the margins. In the statutory counselling organisations I visited, the Black counsellor interviewed was also often the only Black member of staff. Many of the counsellors I interviewed were working in small projects catering for the needs of black clients with time-limited funding or were part of a voluntary

service. Two of the counselling services where I interviewed four Black counsellors have since closed due to lack of continued funding.

Whilst accepting of Mirza's caution (1997) to beware of over-emphasising Black commonalities, it was important to note the common messages and stories from the research interviews. Sometimes, 'my story' and 'their story' had the same or similar characters, sometimes the outcomes were more shocking, more painful. However, the consistent themes of isolation, and of being on the outside of things, featured strongly throughout.

The changing behaviour of the researcher

The research interview itself was in many ways not dissimilar to my general use of counselling skills in an interview situation. I was surprised by the rapidity with which relationships developed and the high level of self-disclosure that occurred. Some of this was due to being the 'guest' of the interviewee.

Hearing the accounts about some of the painful experiences of Black counsellors occasionally led me to express my sense of outrage and frustration during the interview itself, verbally and non-verbally, on three occasions. This is clearly evident in some of the transcribed taped recordings and may have had an effect on the research participants which led them to disclose further in their accounts or seek to please me by embellishing their stories.

The research data revealed a wealth of experience and potential residing in the Black counselling practitioner community which has not been fully realised or acknowledged. It is almost as if they have been silenced by being in the minority, and their participation in the research was an invitation to contribute to the field of knowledge on counselling matters and training specifically.

As the research process has progressed I have noted the ways in which my counselling practice, counselling supervision and training work has changed. I have been influenced by the experience of interviewing other Black counsellors. Their repeated experiences have validated some of my previously held views about the ways in which issues of 'race' and culture could be addressed in counselling training. I have become more critical of my counselling relationships with black clients and Black supervisees. In training I have been pro-active in addressing issues of 'race', culture and ethnicity and found ways to make the material used more challenging and accessible for black and white students. I have made reference to racial identity models more readily as a tool for further discussion and analysis in training sessions.

This is of particular importance, as the majority of the counselling trainees I teach are white. The outcomes of the research findings have provided me with even more evidence of the need to accelerate the case for an integrated approach to addressing 'race', culture and ethnicity into the training programmes I am involved with. This has to be done whilst appreciating and seeking to accommodate competing issues relevant to counselling and relationship building, some of which involve exploration of the experiences of other minority clients (sexual orientation, transgendered clients, clients with a disability, for example) and their attendant issues. I am also aware of my position as lone Black counsellor and trainer, and how I can be silenced, silence myself or collude. What has become clear is that there is a dearth of available training materials on the issues and this may affect the motivation of the reluctant or ignorant counselling trainer seeking to provide some input that is meaningful.

My research diary entries show that often, before each interview, I was subdued and reticent. However, in each case I returned from the interview 'uplifted' and 'inspired'. There may also have been some sense of relief at having completed another research interview. The effect of exploring the experience of training and counselling with another Black colleague had a therapeutic effect on me. In clinical peer supervision I explored the ways in which the research interviews were the personal therapy and supervision with Black practitioners that I never had and how this might be the same for the interviewee. A large number of participants also reported similar feelings post-interview. However, their feelings seemed to be connected to having the space and time to explore their training experiences, whereas my feelings were associated with learning vicariously about their experiences.

In my working and personal life I was in a 'white' world, cushioned to some extent from some of the immediate realities of racism by my occupation and my domestic and personal life, and yet I knew that racism was a daily experience that I minimised. The research evidence collected indicated that my experience was not necessarily unique.

The interpretative model described below attempts to show how the Black counsellors in this research reflected on their daily and, in some cases, momentary experiences as individuals and as counsellors.

The Black Counsellor's training experience

The interpretative model of the Black counsellor's training experience (Appendix 8) attempts to summarise the results of the research schematically. This non-linear model, based on the concepts developed by Helms (1995) and Atkinson et al. (see Sue and Sue 1990 p 97), identifies some of the important events in the Black counsellor's training experience.

At the Awareness or Avoidance stage, the Black counsellor is surrounded by evidence of the impact of issues of 'race', culture, ethnicity, and racism, and is selective in responding to or recognising the impact this has on them as individuals. The impact could be significant, prompting political action, or it could be interpreted as minimal by the counsellor and tolerated as the 'norm'. At the same time, the Black counsellor in training will be experiencing the typical feelings associated with being a trainee, whilst being aware of course demands and the goal of qualification.

The Contact or Connection phase can occur intermittently, and is not limited to one major event. At this point, the Black counsellor is likely to experience the responses of peers, clients or significant others as threatening, painful and difficult. This experience can often be described as a visceral response and as such is usually internalised by the receiver and not commented upon. Non-verbal responses may be noticed, including withdrawal into silence.

Like the Contact or Connection phase, the Contact with racist thinking phase occurs intermittently, and is not confined to one event. During these two stages, the Black counsellor engages in formulating and re-formulating information and ideas about race, culture and racial identity based on the information available. This includes personal history and culture research, observation of others in relationships (black and white), experimentation with terminology and labels used to describe the self, and a significant amount of internal dialogue which attempts to make sense of experiences.

The Reflection phase arises out of the process and 'work' done in the previous two phases. In this phase the Black counsellor organises their thoughts and feelings as well as establishing clearer courses of action in relationships. Again, this phase is not fixed but part of a flow of actions, feelings, and thoughts, in response to events or significant stimuli.

Throughout the above process, the model assumes that the Black counsellor is engaged in training or is in practice with clients. This model could be useful in informing future practice and counselling training development.

Counselling training within higher education – needs and responsibilities

Higher Education institutions and counselling training organisations have a basic responsibility to provide training through knowledge and skills development that equips the eventual graduate of the training to work effectively and ethically with clients. The counselling trainer's additional responsibilities include the provision of appropriate and relevant training to enable the counsellor to work with a range of clients and client groups.

From the research evidence and the literature it was apparent that counselling trainers need to have access to their own training about course delivery and facilitation of training groups in order to enhance their practice as counsellors and tutors. The Higher Education Academy (2004) has begun a process of consultation aimed at securing agreed professional standards for academic practice which will include threshold standards that are defined and monitored, with recognition of the importance of continuing professional development. Firm proposals and policies arising from this consultation could encourage a more rigorous approach to the design and delivery of counselling training programmes through the examples of good practice that already exist within higher education.

More specifically, counselling training programmes should contain clear evidence of how issues of ethnicity, race and culture will be integrated into the training as a common thread rather than a 'bolted on' element or topic. To be effective for all clients, it is necessary for the national counselling bodies and major institutions to arrive at a broad agreement about the content and delivery of counselling training. It is important that the competence levels of trainers, trainees and graduates are agreed so that they can be monitored. There is a need to review and identify the components of effective counsellor training and to develop sympathetic systems of monitoring which are not disruptive or so prescriptive that they do not allow for flexibility and creativity. Such developments would, in the short term, remove some of the mystery that surrounds counselling and counselling training for prospective trainees and provide some security for clients.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research was to document and analyse the training experiences of Black counsellors, as this has not been done before. Therefore, this research makes a useful contribution to knowledge by providing insights into the counselling training experience from the perspective of a Black trainee. This research was done with a view to making a contribution to future training developments in counselling, the curriculum content of training programmes, and counselling practice. This study showed how the training experience of Black counsellors has an impact on their work with black and white clients. The research showed how the ethnicity of the counsellor affects their training experience and relationships with white colleagues and trainers.

Through analysis of a sample group of forty-four, this piece of qualitative research examined the experiences of Black counsellors during training and post-qualification. The research methodology has relied on three main lines of inquiry:

(i) the analysis of data collected from semi-structured interviews;

(ii) analysis and comparison of current literature and relevant research material available with the research data collected;

(iii) the situated knowledge and role of the Black researcher.

Training experiences

As stated earlier, the data of this research was collected over five years. It takes approximately five years for a counsellor to complete their training and practice training requirement for BACP accreditation. During and beyond this time frame, counsellors are usually actively engaged in acquiring further training through attendance and study on continuing professional development courses or more lengthy training in specialised areas or different counselling orientation training. Training is therefore a significant feature in the working life of a counsellor. It is from their training experiences and associated training modes such as reading, peer group studies and supervision that the counsellor seeks to monitor and develop their practice. As is the case with many professions (e.g. nursing, social work), counsellors are required to maintain records of their continuing professional development as evidence of competent professional practice status.

Course content

The content of pre- and post-qualification training programmes is of importance to the counsellor and has direct implications for their clients or recipients. The way in which the training is delivered and facilitated by the counselling trainer is important, and may prompt the trainee to replicate relevant ideas and positive experiences from the training in their practice. It might also serve to stimulate interest in the pursuance of further training and development for the counsellor.

The evidence from this research shows that, overall, the research participants reported that the content of the initial training programmes paid insufficient attention to issues of 'race', culture, and Black perspectives and experience. The white western perspective on counselling and helping relationships was dominant, with little or no reference to other perspectives. These results are similar to Mckenzie-Mavinga's research conducted in 1991, cited in her recent work (2003). The exception in this research was the counsellor who studied on a Black therapy course. This research evidence is supported further from the results of my informal discussions with Black counsellors encountered before and after the data collection period.

In some of these more informal discussions there was evidence of positive initial training experiences from two Black counsellors. However, in both cases, this was countered by accounts of negative counselling training experiences at post-qualification (post-graduate) level, in terms of content and process.

Process and delivery

In their consideration of teaching and training on matters of race, Lewis et al. (2001) state that:

> '...teaching should lead not to a facile notion of tolerance but instead to a complicated concept of difference that troubles one's position and power within the dynamic relations we all enter and to which we must respond'.
> (p. 321)

The research evidence shows that the presence of the Black counselling trainee on a course tended to elicit a defensive response from white trainers or trainees. The presence of the Black counsellor did not encourage exploration of issues of culture, difference, and 'race' as a reality, in terms of training group interpersonal dynamics. Much of the research evidence pointed to scapegoating of Black trainees or defiant ignorance. Rendering the Black trainees invisible was one way of avoiding this

exploration. This also suggests race and culture might not even be broached on a course without Black participants.

Overall, the high level of dissatisfaction reported in relation to course content, process, and delivery, on addressing issues of 'race' and culture, did not seem to deflect the Black counsellors from their pursuit of further studies and continued professional development. Only one out of the forty-four Black counsellors interviewed announced her disinterest in pursuing further training because of her initial training experiences. Two factors that may account for Black counsellors' continued interest in further training might be their knowledge that further training improves work and career prospects. All of the Black counsellors interviewed regarded it as a necessity for a Black applicant to have more 'paper evidence' of their competence than their white counterpart. The Black counsellors interviewed anticipated that future training experiences might not be dissimilar to their first training experience, and accepted that they were better prepared to 'weather the storm' in order to achieve their goals. There was consensus from the research participants that the use of a combination of 'lying low', pragmatism, resignation, and emotional toughness were crucial coping strategies. Secondly, the potential for the further personal development and enhanced effectiveness as counsellors was seen as a powerful motivator for those counsellors with a sense of personal and or community mission.

However, the survival strategies used by Black counsellors, whilst apparently effective for them as individuals, prevent joint exploration and enhanced understanding of the impact of 'race' and culture on the counselling relationship for both Black and white counsellors. Furthermore, the research highlights that assessment of the competence of black and white trainees to work with culturally different clients was absent or limited. This has implications for black clients where an issue of 'race', culture, or the experience of racism may be at the source of their distress and their reason for seeking counselling help.

Implications for future training

The results of this research highlight the need to review and examine the content, process, and delivery of counselling training at all levels, in terms of how training prepares counsellors to work with black clients. This is amplified by Banks (1999) and Tuckwell (2002), who focus on white counsellors showing how deficiencies in training on issues of 'race' and culture affect their understanding of themselves as

racial beings, and have a consequent effect on their work with black and white clients. The enduring and damaging effect of racism is not limited to urban areas or locations with a high-density Black population. Neither black nor white counsellors can claim that issues of 'race' and culture and racism may not be a feature of their work with clients, wherever they work in Britain. The inclusion of issues of 'race' and culture in all counselling training is therefore relevant and important to all counsellors. Of equal importance is the way in which the issues are addressed in the training environment, requiring skilful and knowledgeable facilitation on the part of counselling trainers.

An inquiry and audit of the ways in which issues of 'race' and culture are explored in training in Britain, with recommendations for the future work, could assist in the debate about how counselling training tackles issues affecting those who identify as part of a minority group or a number of groups. This would be beneficial to the counselling trainee who identifies as part of a minority group or groups and potential clients from a minority group or groups.

Poet, psychotherapist and trainer McKenzie-Mavinga, whilst keen to explore black issues, advocates (2003), focusing less on racism and placing more emphasis on the socio-political contexts of blacks and their history, in order to foster empathy and realistic debate amongst counselling trainees and the counselling profession. She argues that despite the loud protestations of Blacks within and outside of the counselling profession the situation remains that:

> 'The oppression of black peoples is one of
> the most visible, yet least attended to, issues
> in the therapeutic world'.
> (p. 106)

Similarly, Moodley (2003a) refers to the claim of many individuals to a multiplicity of identities, arguing that focusing on Black perspectives and the impact of racism is a distraction from investigating and tackling the structural causes of racism. This contention is echoed by Tudor and Smith (2003), who advocate that counselling training should encompass a broad understanding of oppression in all its forms. This involves engaging counselling trainees in an exploration of individualism, competition, power and exploitation, within themselves, the training group and in social structures. Such an approach is a shift from the tokenistic one-off sessions currently on offer within a significant number of counselling training programmes.

This supports the direction towards embedding the issues of anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of the counselling training experience.

With greater emphasis in training on the social context of the client it is anticipated that counsellors will appreciate that individual autonomy is not always a reality. This could guard against perpetuating the earlier questionable, yet popularised, notion of the client being in charge of their destiny, and counselling being a value free activity (Bolger 1982). Such ideas would inevitably alter the content and process of training, and might have implications for the way in which some counsellors see themselves and their role within a community.

Handled sensitively and non-defensively, this strategy holds the prospect for Black counsellors to examine and challenge some of their own ideas about 'race' and culture alongside their white peers, rather than in absentia or not at all. The Black counsellor might be able to contextualise their own experience within such a framework, and this may offer some concrete exemplars into what can sometimes lead to emotional and inconclusive debate.

It is important therefore to monitor not just that such issues are being discussed in training but also the way in which this being done. This is so that insensitive handling of important issues does not lead to further misunderstanding and oppression of the minority trainee and or clients.

The current situation, reliant on the good will of trainers, training organisations, counselling supervisors and counsellors themselves, is insufficient and does not promote the development and sharing of good practice that may exist in this area, nationwide.

Implications for the trainer

In 1982, Bolger recognised the power and influence of counselling and counselling training across a broad spectrum of the helping professions. He noted the important stages in the development of counselling training from its infancy in 1965, and announced that:

> 'Courses of training by their selection of approaches can determine the nature of counselling practice in the country and there is a paradox at the heart of counselling. On one hand there appears to be a common philosophy, a common approach to human beings, which unites the counselling fraternity. On the other hand the counselling literature reveals a plethora of counselling methods derived from such opposing theoretical stand-points as psycho-analysis

and behaviourism.'
(p. 237)

Lyons (2001), a senior counselling trainer within a university setting, revives some of the debate about the selection process involved in counselling training and its potential collision with some of the principles associated with Equal Opportunities policies, particularly in relation to class, disability and and the selector's ability to name the identifiable qualities of the potential counsellor at the interview stage.
It would appear that little has changed since Bolger offered this summary observation. The selection of counselling approaches used in training has determined the nature of counselling practice, which is largely divided in to two schools, Psychodynamic and Humanistic. This has an influence on training, training methods employed and the 'nature of counselling practice'.
The research findings indicate that trainers who have come out of this tradition seem reluctant to initiate the shaking of foundations of what appears to be a growth industry. There are minor examples of improvement, but overall the continued growth in recruitment for counselling training does not provide sufficient stimulus to bring about significant changes in curriculum or delivery. Black counsellors and, more so, Black trainers and supervisors, who occupy a minority position within the membership of the counselling profession, are less able to institute change based on the forcefulness of their argument or critical mass. Whilst the Black trainers mentioned in this research were involved in the provision of training on issues of 'race' and culture, albeit for one-off training events, there is insufficient conclusive evidence that the majority of Black trainers, supervisors and counsellors in the England see the need for change, this is an assumption of the researcher.
Trainers who are aware of the need to address issues of 'race' and culture within their counselling programmes often encounter the constraints of the structure of courses, which places emphasis on:

(i) the development of understanding of a specific theoretical standpoint or orientation;
(ii) the development of practical counselling skills in the class room setting and supervised practice;
iii) the development of self-awareness through experiential work, exercises, individual and group work.

Devising ways in which issues of 'race' and culture can be integrated into the training curriculum requires a significant amount of energy, commitment and knowledge on the part of the trainer. According to West and McLeod (2003):

> 'Issues of cultural identity and difference, and how they are negotiated in relationships, appear to have become a major theme within counselling and psychotherapy in Britain.'

The research and the work of authors such as Mckenzie-Mavinga (2003) and evidence cited in this research contradict West's and McLeod assertion.
This observed phenomenon, if true, has not permeated fully into the training programmes for counselling as a major theme and still remains a minor or absent theme as far as the research participants are concerned. This suggests that there is either resistance amongst trainers to take up this new agenda within counselling training, or that the trainers are in need of training and therefore not able to fulfil the demands of this major theme.

Trainer competence

Presently, the emphasis in counselling training has been on the assessment of trainee competence. Perhaps the time has come to examine trainer competence. Apart from BACP trainer accreditation, which is largely completed by portfolio, little has been done to continually assess and enhance trainer competence. The role and power of the counselling trainer has a direct impact on the trainee and their subsequent practice as so often the counselling trainer is seen as a rôle model by trainees. If this is the case, then trainers who show a marked resistance to address 'race' and culture in the context of the counselling orientation or the training in general; who are inept in their facilitation of this exploration; who are unable to talk with some understanding of the impact of cultural difference about their work with black clients; who are wedded exclusively to one counselling or psychotherapy orientation having little knowledge or respect for other orientations and who are unwilling to acknowledge the presence of their Black trainees make poor role models for white trainees and ineffective trainers for Black and white counsellors.
A recent trend in training, encouraging white counsellors to become more aware of their racial identity (Tuckwell 2002) could be an important development for majority white trainers to pursue as a starting point. Ideally, the insights gained could be used

in their delivery and facilitation of training, and ultimately improve the training experience of Black counsellors.

A note of warning from Bergerson (2003) is a useful reminder here that the growing interest in white identity development has the potential to shift the focus away from challenging racism and could be an example of 'members of the dominant group [reclaiming] the pivotal focus' (p. 56) in a similar way to that which occurs in counselling training groups.

Contribution to knowledge

Lago and Thompson (2002) identified some of the key elements that would improve counselling training in the area of addressing race and cultural identity. They recommend that in order for this training to be effective it will require 'informed and skilled trainers' who can instil confidence in the Black trainees, particularly those who may lack traditional prior qualifications. They suggest that counselling training and practice are two crucial areas for research that will assist in the development of future counselling training programmes.

The outcomes of this research into the training experiences of Black counsellors makes an important contribution to knowledge in this area and may provide guidance for 'sensitive and effective' future training. As a result of this research more is known about counselling training in Britain as well as gains of the phenomenological perspectives on training from the trainee. This research has identified broad themes related to training and development that are pertinent to contemporary theory and practice issues in counselling and psychotherapy.

Limitations of this research

As discussed in the methodological reflections in Chapters 4 & 5, the research findings could not offer a longitudinal study of the training experience of Black counsellors. This might have been a useful way of tracing the training and post-qualification development of individual trainees, reflecting on their experiences in more depth with a series of interviews throughout this period, and is proposed for future research.

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview might have yielded richer data in terms of what Black counsellors have learnt that is useful to them in their practice with more focussed questions on this aspect of their work, but this might have been at the expense of the research interview process and compromised data collection.

Further research

An investigation into the experiences of black clients working with Black counsellors is recommended as an area for further research. This could highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages of ethnic-matching as well as exploring the dynamics of the relationship in terms of the hypothesised racial identity development models proposed by Helms (1995) and others.

Similarly, research into the experiences of Black counsellors working with white clients would provide an additional complement to Banks' work (1999) which investigated the white counsellor-black client relationship.

There is a clear need to find ways to examine and monitor counselling training programmes nationally so that their content and underpinning philosophy provide reasonably predictable outcomes for all trainees. This is not an argument for aggressive standardisation of counselling training curricula. Included in this research into the practice of counselling trainers would be analysis of their methods, experiences as trainers and the national training agenda. Their own training and background would highlight good practice and gaps in the training curriculum. This may inspire a renewal of interest in a national forum for counselling trainers to discuss their work.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of Anti Oppressive Practice training from the perspective of the service user would indicate its relevance as part of the training for counsellors and other public service professionals.

Similarly, research into the accessibility and diversity of staffing of counselling services in Britain would provide a useful source of information about the effectiveness of counselling in general and the ways in which minority ethnic clients make use of the services available.

Conclusion

The Black counsellors participating in this research had 'insider' knowledge, from their own experience, of how some white counsellors misinterpret and can mistreat black clients due to practitioner ignorance. This introduced a note of caution in their work with their peers and for some confirmed that, potentially at least, white counsellors have little understanding of or respect for their black clients. The research participants had knowledge and experience of the transformative powers of counselling and were keen to exploit this in all relationship building processes. It is hoped that trainers and training organisations can pave the way to develop new and

appropriate training programmes that effectively address issues of race and culture in ways that are meaningful and enriching to Black and white counselling trainees. This will require the active recruitment and training of trainees and trainers from diverse backgrounds. This will include black and white counselling trainers at the local and national level who are competent to deliver training which meets the needs of counselling trainees and thus supports their work as responsible and ethical counselling and psychotherapy practitioners.

I believe that this research has satisfied the criteria outlined by the University for the award of a doctorate. The work is original and contributes to knowledge in the research area as described in the opening paragraphs to Chapter 1. It is a work of substance and scholarship as demonstrated by the depth (research methods used and literature accessed) and breadth of coverage contained in these pages, and the time spent researching this subject. This research contains work of publishable quality.

Valerie V. V. Watson

August 2004

Appendix 1

Black and white symbolic imagery

Colours linked to cognitive affective associations within western culture:

Black

'As the colour of the primordial void before the coming of the light, black is universally associated with darkness, death, sickness, and evil. Black represents the initial germinal state of many processes, as it does in numerous cosmologies and in alchemy. The *nigredo*, the initial stage of the alchemical *opus*, was known as the 'germination in darkness', and is paralleled by the 'dark night of the soul' of St John of the Cross. In the Christian tradition black is the colour of the Prince of Darkness, of despair, humiliation, death, sorrow, and mourning. It therefore readily symbolizes the 'shadow' aspect of the unconscious psyche.'
(p.147)

White

'Associated with the light, sun, air, holiness, perfection, and innocence. Paradoxically, white can be associated with death as well as life for, when worn at a funeral, as it is in the East and was in ancient Greece and Rome, it represents birth into the new life beyond the grave. Even when worn at weddings it represents death to the old single unmarried life and birth into the new – as well as symbolizing the chastity and purity of the bride (though nowadays this symbolism is more honoured in the breach than the observance).When used to make a flag, white denotes truce, surrender, friendship, and good-will.'(p.148)

Excerpts from: Stevens, A. (1998) Ariadne's Clue. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press.

Appendix 1 (cont)

White Comedy

I waz whitemailed
By a white witch,
Wid white magic
An white lies,
Branded by a white sheep
I slaved as a whitesmith
Near a white spot
Where I suffered whitewater fever.
Whitelisted as a whiteleg
I waz in de white book
As a master of white art,
It waz like white death.

People called me white jack
Some hailed me as a white wog,
So I joined de white watch
Trained as a white guard
Lived off the white economy.
Caught and beaten by de whiteshirts
I waz condemned to a white mass,
Don't worry,
I shall be writing to de Black House.

by Benjamin Zephaniah

From Rudyard Kipling: 'The White Man's Burden'

Take up the White Man's burden-
Send forth the best ye breed-
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild-
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half child.
(p.304)

The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (1979) 3rd edition London: Book Club Associates

Appendix 2

BAC(P) recommendations for training course content

Summarised guiding concepts and assumptions for an accredited course

1. The course should contain eight basic elements: admission, staff development, client work, supervision, skills training, theory, professional development and assessment.
2. The course should provide grounding in a core theoretical model.
3. The course should create a balance between theory, skills components and personal development, consistent with the core theoretical model.
4. The assessment process should include regular ongoing constructive feedback.
5. The course should help students to develop as reflective practitioners, who should also be required to monitor and evaluate their own work and personal development.
6. The course should be appropriately staffed with not less than two core members for any course.

(BAC 2000 p.9)

Extract from BACP Accreditation of Training Courses (2004)

C3.1 Courses applying for accreditation must be able to demonstrate that they provide a grounding for the student in a core theoretical model. This may be grounded in a single, integrative or eclectic theoretical stance but in each case:

C3.2 There should be sufficient theory, drawing upon relevant social science disciplines to enable students to make explicit:

a. What assumptions are made about the nature and development of human beings?

b. How do psychological problems develop?

c. How does the model account for the perpetuation of psychological problems?

d. How does the model explain the process of therapeutic change?

e. What is the range of therapeutic interventions explicated in the core model?

f. How does the model deal with any apparent discrepancies between theoretical and practical aspects?

...iii The social system in which we live and the ways these affect client development and counselling practice. (The term "social systems" is taken to include such factors as race, culture, gender, sexuality, politics, religion, ethics and class.)

(BACP 2002 p13-14)

Appendix 3

Racial identity development models

a) Helms' updated model of racial identity development and information processing strategies (IPS)

White racial identity ego status		People of color racial identity ego status	
Contact status IPS: **Oblivious**	Satisfaction with status quo. Unaware of self as a racial being. Oblivious to racism, and own participation in it. Tends to ignore differences or regard them as unimportant (people are people).	**Conformity (Pre-encounter status)** IPS: **Selective perception and obliviousness to socio-racial concerns**	Identifies with values of dominant culture. Lacks awareness of ethnic perspective. Exhibits negative attitudes towards self and others as part of an ethnic group. Oblivious to socio-political histories.
Disintegration status IPS: **Suppression and ambivalence**	Becomes aware of racism, leading to feelings of guilt, shame, depression. Begins to acknowledge whiteness. Feels forced to choose between one of own group loyalty and humanism. Responds in three ways: over-identification with minority group/s, paternalism, withdrawal into white culture.	**Dissonance (Encounter status)** IPS: **Repression of anxiety-provoking racial information**	Ambivalence and confusion concerning own socio-racial group. Actively questioning of dominant culture. Becomes aware of issues involving racism, sexism, oppression. Feelings of anger and loss. Identifies with the history of the personal cultural group.

White racial identity ego status		People of color racial identity ego status	
Reintegration status IPS: **Selective perception and negative out-group distortion**	Idealization of one's own socio-racial group, denigration and hostility towards other groups. Perceives minority traits as negative, becomes overtly or covertly anti-minority.	**Immersion/Emersion status** IPS: **Hypervigilance toward racial stimuli and dichotomous thinking**	Idealization of one's own socio-racial group and denigration of that which is perceived as White. Use of own-group external standards to self-define. Own-group loyalty and commitment is valued.
Pseudo-independence status IPS: **Reshaping reality and selective perception**	Intellectual interest in own group and deceptive tolerance of minority groups. May make limited attempts to 'help' other racial groups.	**Internalization status** IPS: **Flexibility and analytical thinking**	Positive commitment to one's own socio-racial group, internally defined racial attributes, and capacity to assess and respond objectively to members of the dominant group.
Immersion/Emersion status IPS: **Hypervigilance and reshaping**	Tries to find a personal meaning for racism and the way one benefits. Alert to issues of racism and definitions of whiteness.	**Integrative Awareness status** IPS: **Flexibility and complexity**	Capacity to value one's own collective identities as well as empathize and collaborate with members of other oppressed groups.
Autonomy status IPS: **Flexibility and complexity**	Feels able to relinquish the privileges of racism. May avoid situations that require participation in racial oppression.		

Based on Helms' model (1984) and updated model (1995)

Appendix 3 (cont)

Relationship Types Based on Helms' Model

Parallel:
Interactions of participants are of similar identity ego status.
In this relationship participants seek to maintain the status quo, avoid tensions and maintain harmony. Participants in this interaction think similarly and share assumptions about race and racial dynamics.

Regressive:
The participant with the most social power operates as if from a less powerful position in deference to the requirements of the group or group pressure. Fear of being ostracised or ridiculed usually forces regressive behaviour and the person concerned may act or speak against their beliefs and values in order to maintain their position as one of the group.

Progressive:
When one or more of the participants in the interaction uses their social power and understanding of racial dynamics to inform and challenge others with less sophisticated racial identity ego statuses to consider alternative ways of viewing racial events.

Crossed:
This relationship is characterised by antagonistic interactions in which the participants concerned are in conflict operating from ego statuses that are directly opposed to one another. There is disagreement and the relationships and interactions tend to be short-lived with little meaningful dialogue.

These descriptions adapted from Helms (1995)

Racial/Cultural Identity Development

b) Model devised by Atkinson, Morten and Sue

Stages of Minority Development Model	Attitude toward Self	Attitude toward Others of the Same Minority	Attitude toward Others of Different Minority	Attitude toward Dominant Group
Stage 1: **Conformity**	Self-depreciating	Group-depreciating	Discriminatory	Group-appreciating
Stage 2: **Dissonance**	Conflict between self-depreciating and appreciating	Conflict between group-depreciating and group-appreciating	Conflict between dominant-held views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience	Conflict between group-appreciating and group-depreciating
Stage 3: **Resistance and Immersion**	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Conflict between feelings of empathy for other minority experiences and feelings of culturo-centrism	Group-depreciating
Stage 4: **Introspection**	Concern with basis of self-appreciation	Concern with nature of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with ethnocentric basis for judging others	Concern with basis of group-depreciation
Stage 5: **Integrative Awareness**	Self-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Group-appreciating	Selective appreciation

Based on a model developed by Donald R Atkinson, George Morten and Derald Wing Sue ***Counseling American Minorities: A Cross Cultural Perspective*** *3rd edition cited in* Sue, D.W., and Sue, D., (1990) Counseling the culturally different. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, p.97.

Appendix 4

The Black-Black Dyad

Potential issues in the counselling relationship

Black counsellor	Intersecting factors and concerns	Black client
• Denial of internalised racism • Working with internalised racism of client • Hostility of client — seen as part of the white establishment • Colour blind approach • Questioning of own competence and ability • High expectation of self • Wanting to get it right • Denying the reality of racism in the counselling room, not willing to hear client's experience • Over-identification with client or client's experience • Collusion with or avoidance of client's personal issues • Tension associated with social advocacy role • Recognition of need to work outside of training approach to meet the needs of black client	• Internalised racism *(Rose, 1997)* • Denial that racism exists • No experience of racism or racist events • Denial of ethnicity • Not identifying as black or not white • Biracial or mixed-parentage • The impact of mixed-raced relationships • Not being Black enough • Seen as White • Assumptions about sameness • Denial of difference • Black racism or denigration of other minority groups • Relief of shared ethnicity • Racial identity status and relationship type *(Helms, 1995)* • Being Black is an issue • Being Black is not an issue	• Internalised racism — white is right therefore black counsellor is inferior • High or higher expectations of black counsellor because of shared ethnicity • Lack of trust, confidentiality concerns *(Virdee, 2004)* • Not willing to discuss experience of racism • Wanting to discuss racism, excluding other relevant and specific personal issues • Resistance to challenge • Envy and mistrust of counsellor • Perception of receiving a second-rate service with less qualified black therapist. Early ending of counselling relationship • Seeing counsellor as White • Resistance to disclosure, confidentiality issues

Black counsellor	Intersecting factors and concerns	Black client
• Exploration of race at the expense of client's presenting issues *(Lago and Thompson, 2002)* • Antagonistic and opposing views about client's relationships with white and black people • Denial of client's multiple identities in favour of their ethnicity (e.g. gender, class, sexual orientation, disability) • The need to know Black credentials – Black enough? • Transference issues based on current and previous relationships *(Ward and Banks, 2002)*	• Mistrust/envy • Transference or counter-transferential issues for client and counsellor — projecting inappropriate anger • Positive transference • Avoidance of discussion about race • Matching verbal and non-verbal cues • Some shared understanding of cultural behaviours and values • Considerations of spiritual dimensions	• Antagonistic views about black-black and black-white relationships. Internal oppressor? 'Racial melancholia' *(Cheng, 2001; Alleyne, 2004)* • Wanting to check out the Black credentials of the therapist. • Black enough? • Not Black enough • Not fitting the Black stereotype • Seeing counsellor as potential social or political advocate

Appendix 5

The Black-White Dyad
Potential issues in the counselling relationship

Black counsellor	Intersecting factors and concerns	White client
• Probably trained to work with white clients *(Lago and Thompson, 2002)* • Internalised racism *(Rose, 1997)* • Questioning of own competence — self esteem and professional competence issues • Willing to confront subtle or overt racism • Denial of power • Counter-transference issues based on current and previous relationships • Wanting to get it right — justification, dispelling myths and fantasies of white people about black people	General • Gender, class, Sexual Orientation, Disability, previous and current relationships with Black and White people • The legal framework in UK- equality,asylum,immigration. Specific to counselling relationship • Re-enactment of white-black power relationships existing in UK society • Linguistic racism and non-verbal communication issues • Denial of difference • Denial of power imbalance • Assumptions, stereotypes and fantasies about the other • Racial identity status and resulting relationship type? *(Helms, 1995)* • Mistrust/guarded behaviour • Transference and counter-transference issues based on history or present experience • Colour blind approach	• Will this person understand me? • Racist views overt or covert • Perception of white superiority as a given • Questioning the competence and credibility of counsellor • Language, vocabulary and accent a barrier? • Polite and resistant • Lack of trust • Resists showing anger • Resists disclosure • High expectation or idealisation of counsellor as one who has suffered and survived *(Dumas, 1985; Collins, 1991)* • No place to talk about race events or racist feelings • Guilt and shame *(Parker and Schwartz, 2002)* • Early end to counselling — perception of service as second rate • Transference issues based on previous and or current relationships with Black people

Potential issues in the counselling relationship

Black Client	Intersecting factors and concerns	White Counsellor
• Internalised racism *(Rose 1997)* • Denial of power, has power; acceptance of white superiority and white expertise • High expectations of counsellor • Language or accent barrier? • Lack of acknowledgement of the reality of racism • Resists disclosure and show of emotion • Shows anger • Fear of the power of the white professional • Resists revealing cultural and racial realities —they may be perceived as 'strange' or devalued • Feeling invalidated as a person • Early end to counselling relationship • Relevant experience of racism may not be disclosed in deference to counsellor and counsellor's feelings • Seeing counsellor as a social or political advocate	General • Gender, class, Sexual Orientation, Disability, previous and current relationships with Black and White people • The legal framework in UK- equality asylum, immigration Specific to counselling relationship • Re-enactment of white-black power relationships existing in British society • Linguistic racism and non-verbal communication issues • Denial of difference • Denial of power imbalance • Assumptions, stereotypes and fantasies about the other • Racial identity status and resulting relationship type? *(Helms 1995)* • Mistrust/guarded behaviour • Transference and counter-transference issues based on history or present experience • Colour blind approach	• Denial of power but has power • Covert or overt racist feelings towards client • Belief in white superiority as a given • Low expectations of client-language, accent and vocabulary barrier • Rigid maintenance of Eurocentric counselling methods whether appropriate or not. • Inability or unwillingness to cope with Black perspectives *(Lago and Thompson 2002)* • Concern about getting right • Offering no challenge and an inauthentic relationship • Guilt and shame *(Parker and Schwartz 2002)* • Denial of the impact of racism • Awareness of the impact of racism • Fearful of 'the other' *(Tuckwell 2002, Banks 1992, Fanon 1967 et al)*

Black Client	Intersecting factors and concerns	White Counsellor
• A chance to challenge traditional cultural values and beliefs • A chance to talk about negative feelings of being black and difficult relationships		• Early end to counselling attributed to client - poor communication, social or relationship skills • Seeing client as aggressive, loud, a problem, hard work • Counter-transferential issues — previous and present relationships

Appendix 6

Research interview schedule and questions

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this interview for research. As you know I am surveying the training experiences of Black counsellors in order to document their experience.

My research will also explore how issues of race and culture are addressed within training courses.

You have the right to withdraw from taking part in the interview, or the research at any stage.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will endeavour to maintain confidentiality throughout the interview process. The information given to me will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your name will not be mentioned during the interview and any extracts used in the tape will be worded so that you cannot be identified.

TRANSCRIPTS

A transcript of our interview will be sent to you on request.

Are you still happy for me to tape record the interview

1. Please could you briefly describe the type of work you are doing at the moment?
2. How long have you been doing this work?
3. In what way/s is this work connected to counselling?
4. What led you towards counselling training?
5. Please describe your experience of the training that you had as fully as you can? (prompt — type of training, teaching, methods, dates of training, training levels)
6. Can you tell me about the length of your training?
7. Were there any significant event/s in your training for you? - Please describe them.
8. What, for you were the best and least good aspects of your training?
9. How were the issues of race and culture addressed in your training?
10. In what ways do you think that issues of race and culture might affect the counselling relationship?
11. Can you give practical examples of how race and culture affected/affects your training or work as a counsellor?

12. With hindsight, were there any aspects/areas of your counsellor training that you feel should have been included?
13. Do you/Have you worked with Black clients? (If yes, how many? Approximate numbers, gender?)
14. Do you/Have you worked with White clients? (If yes, how many? Approximate numbers, gender?)
15. Have you noticed anything specific about the needs of Black?White clients? If yes then q.16
16. In your work as a counsellor how do you meet the needs you identify?
17. Do you see yourself as a Black counsellor first?
18. What do you see as the next stage of your professional development as a counsellor?
19. What areas would you like further training in... ?
20. Are you a member of any national/international professional counselling body?
21. What are your views on how issues of race and culture should be handled in counsellor training?
22. What is your experience of being:
    a) a Black counsellor working with White clients
    b) a Black counsellor/counselling trainee working with a White counsellor
    c) a Black counsellor working with Black clients
    d) a Black counsellor/counselling trainee working with a Black counsellor
    e) a Black counsellor working with a White supervisor
    f) a Black counsellor working with a Black supervisor

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 7

Advertisements for research participants

Training Experiences in Counselling

I am currently undertaking a qualitative research project looking at the training experiences of Black counsellors.

If you are in training or a trainer at any level or you are a qualified and experienced counsellor/counselling trainer, would you like to help my research by offering to be interviewed or giving feed-back via a questionnaire?

If you are interested in contributing/helping, I would love to hear from you. My name **is Val Watson** and you can contact me on:

Work telephone no: **0115 951 3712**
Home answerphone: **01773 828 466**
Email: **val.watson@nottingham.ac.uk**
Address: **Dept of Continuing Education, Block B, Cherry Tree Buildings, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD**

Advertised in The Journal of the British Association for Counselling May 1998 vol.9 no. 2 p 116

Training Experiences in Counselling

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Home answerphone: **01773 828 466**
Email: **val.watson@nottingham.ac.uk**
Address: **Dept of Continuing Education, Block B, Cherry Tree Buildings, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD**

Advertised in Race and Cultural Education (RACE) Summer 1998 No.16

THE TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF BLACK COUNSELLORS

I am conducting research into the training experiences of Black counsellors and would like some help from any practising black counsellor or Black Counsellor in training who would be willing to be interviewed for my research. All interviews are treated with the strictest confidence and materials used from the interviews are with the participant's consent.

Interview arrangements

I am willing to arrange interview times and venues to suit the needs of interviewees.

Please contact me on the address/tel.no/ email below or take a tear off strip.

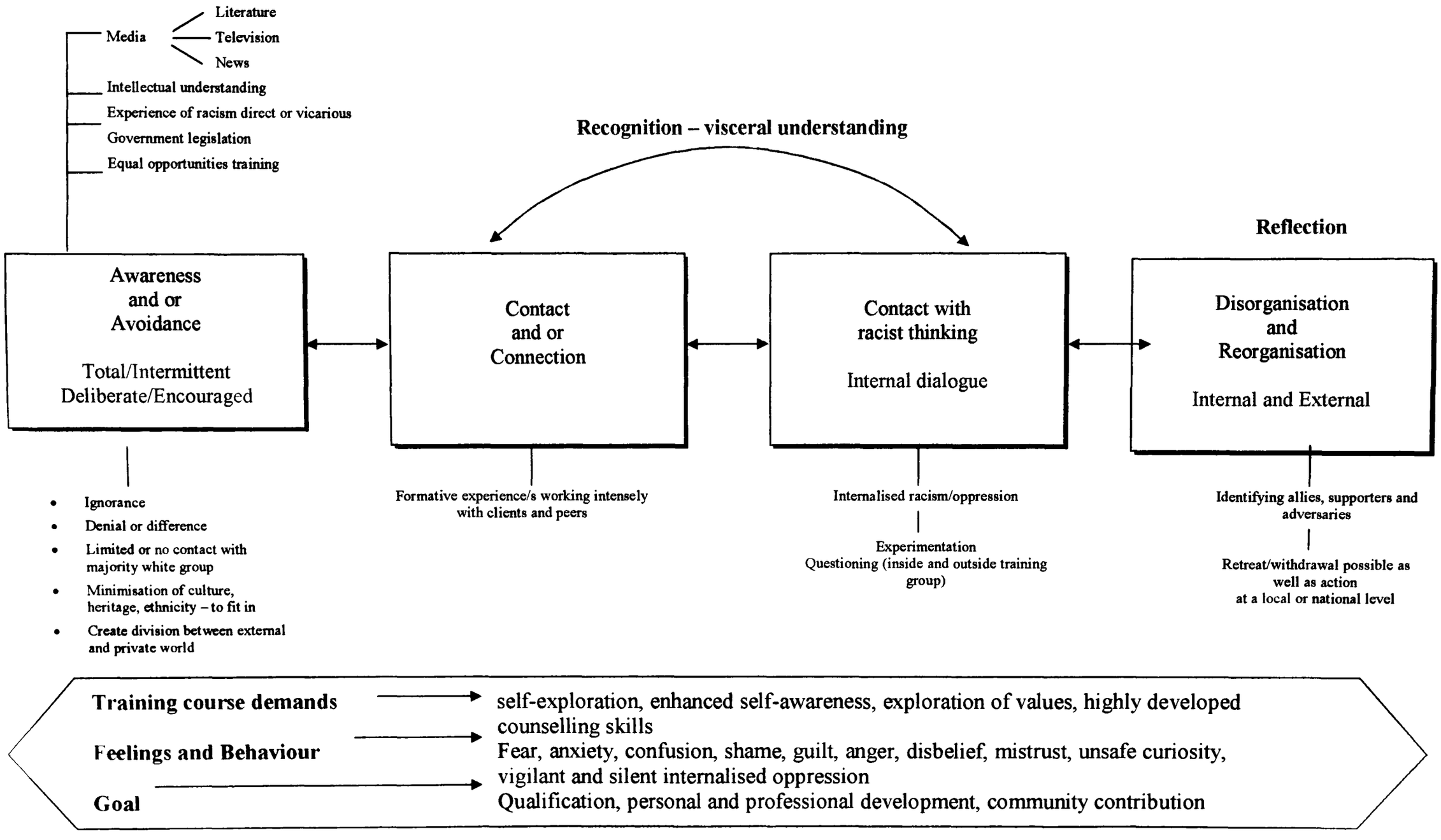
Val Watson, University of Nottingham, Jubilee Campus
School of Continuing Education, Wollaton Road
Nottingham NG8 1BB
Tel: 0115 951 3712 or 01773 828466
Email: val.watson@nottingham.ac.uk **or**
watsonv@btopenworld.com

Thank you
Val Watson

A flier distributed at conferences I attended in 2002-3

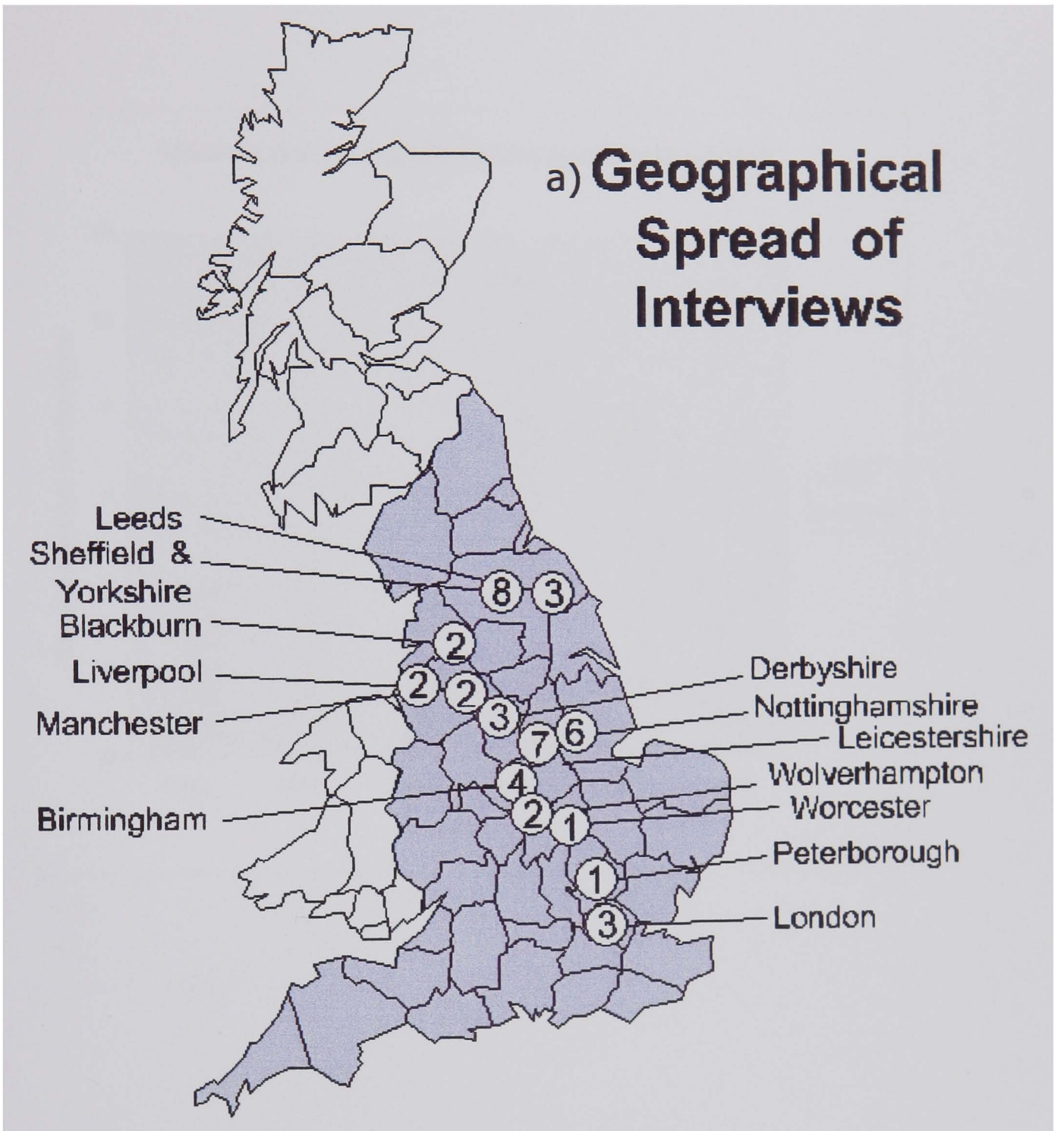
Appendix 8

An interpretative model of the Black counsellor's training experience



Appendix 9

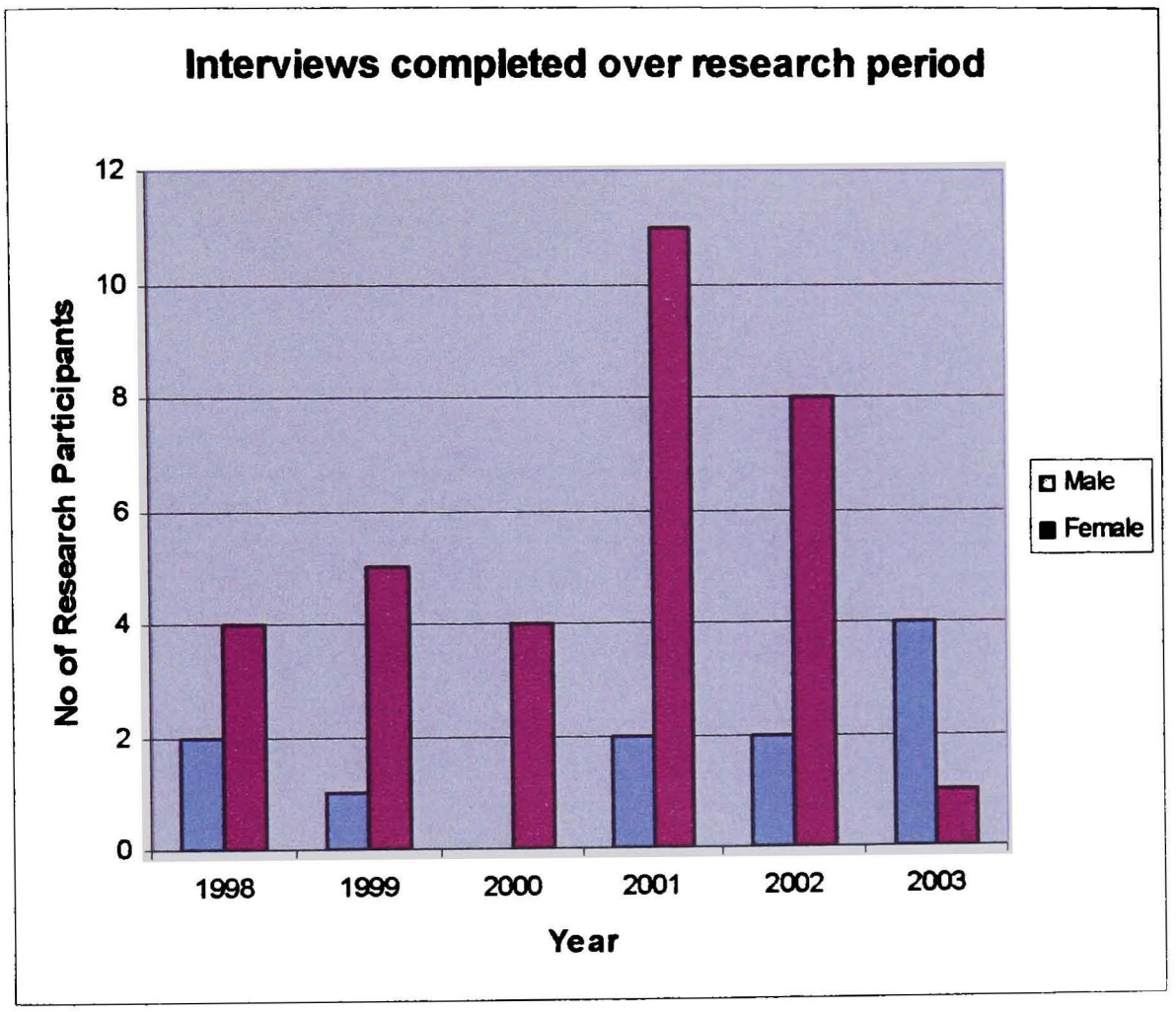
Research findings



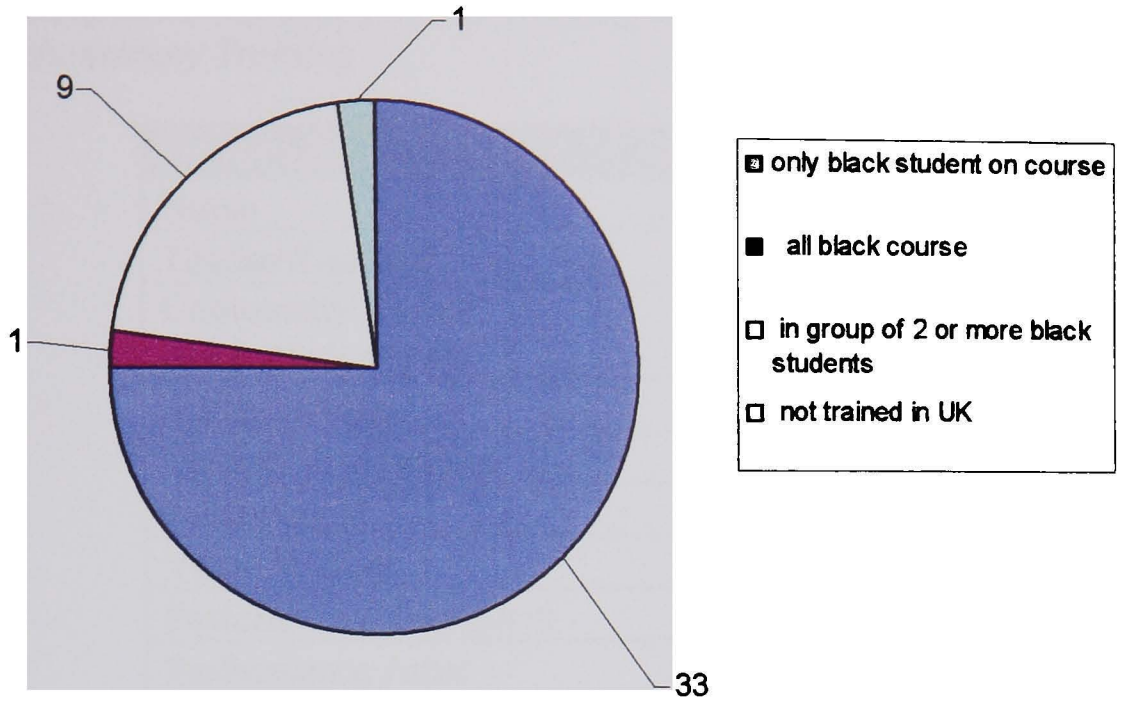
Appendix 9 (cont)

b) Interviews completed over research period

Gender	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Male	2	1	0	2	2	4
Female	4	5	4	11	8	1

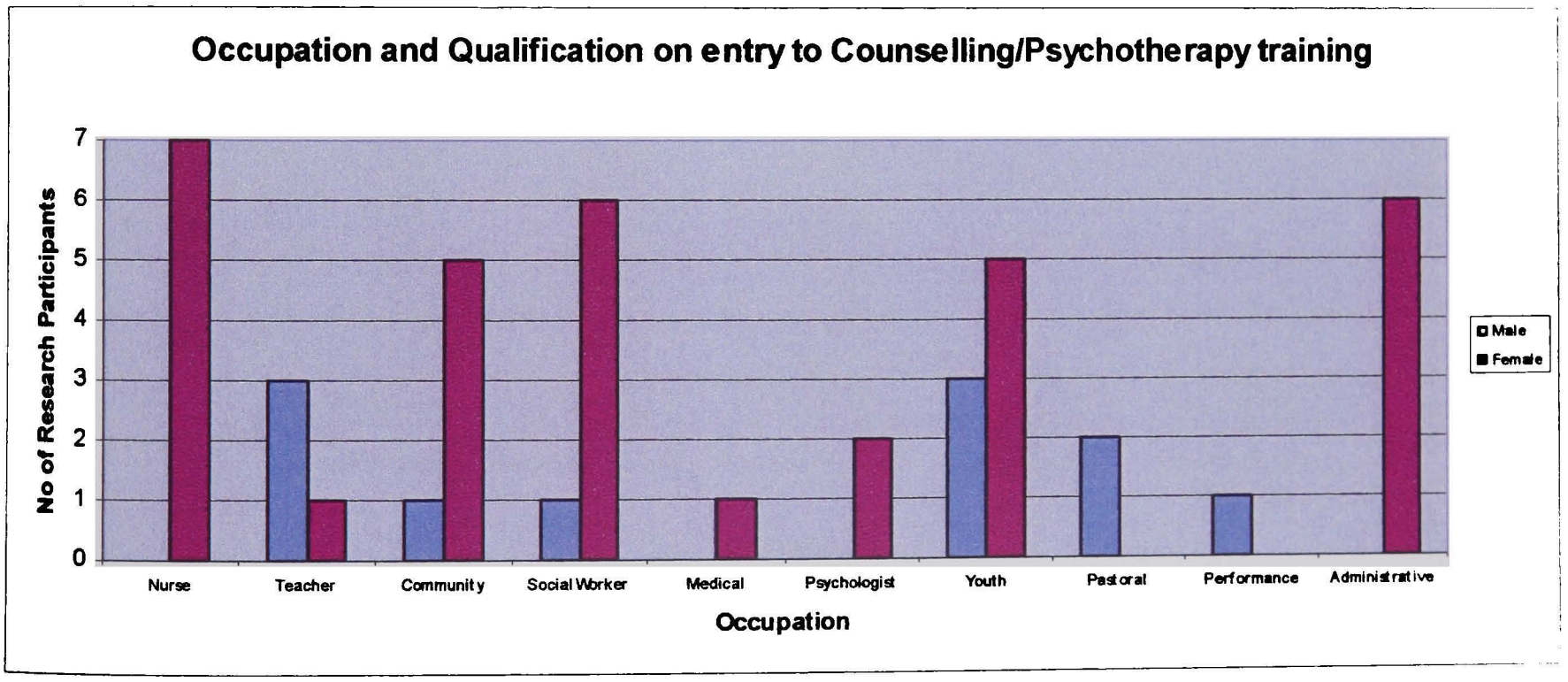


c) Training Group composition - Ethnicity



d) Occupation and Qualification on Entry to Counselling/ Psychotherapy Training

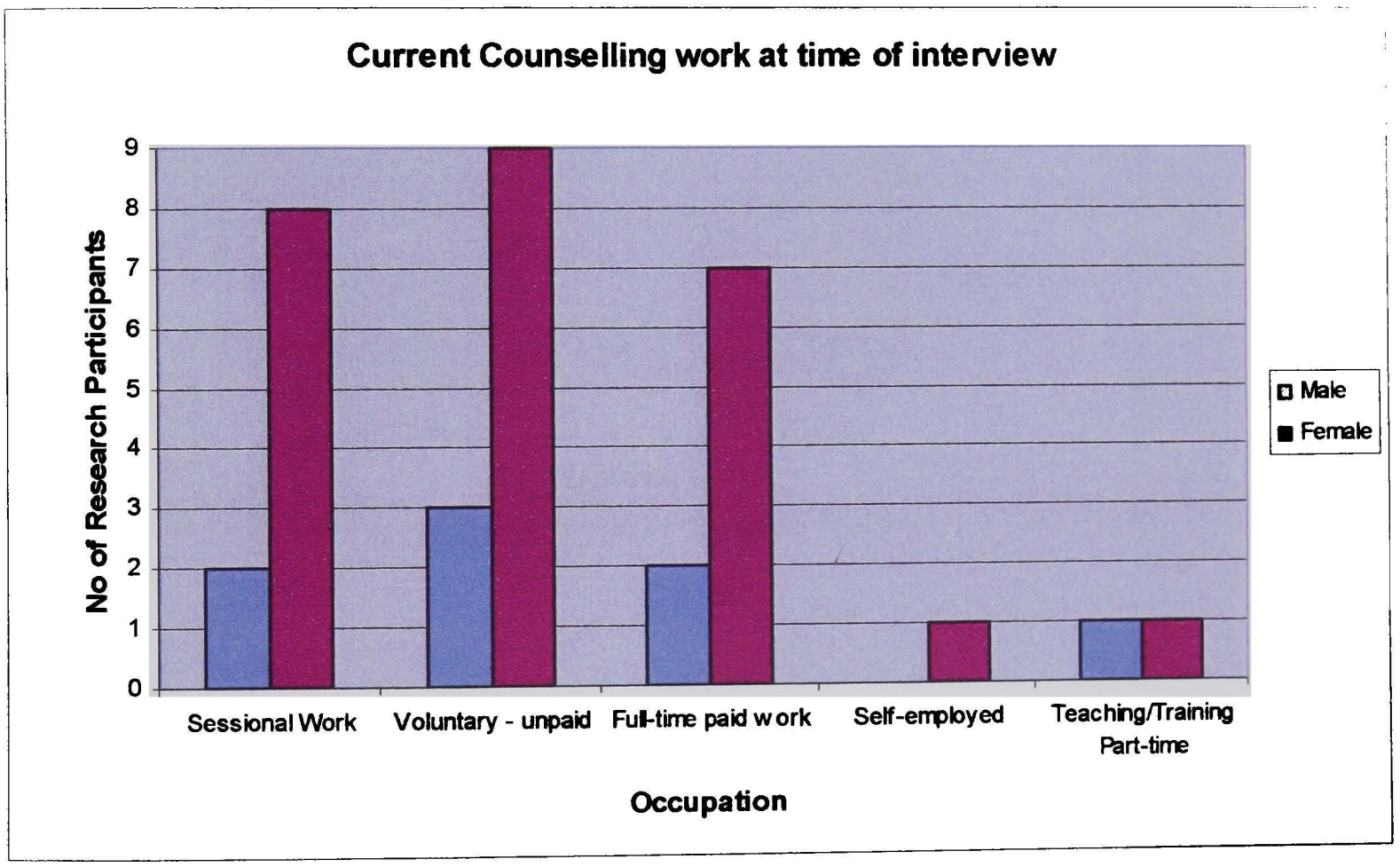
Qualification	Male	Female
Nurse		7
Teacher/Lecturer	3	1
Community worker - voluntary or paid	1	5
Social Worker	1	6
Medical Professional		1
Psychologist		2
Youth Worker	3	5
Pastoral Care (Ministry)	2	
Performance Artist	1	
Administrative and other Professional		6



Appendix 9 (cont)

e) Current Counselling Work at time of Interview

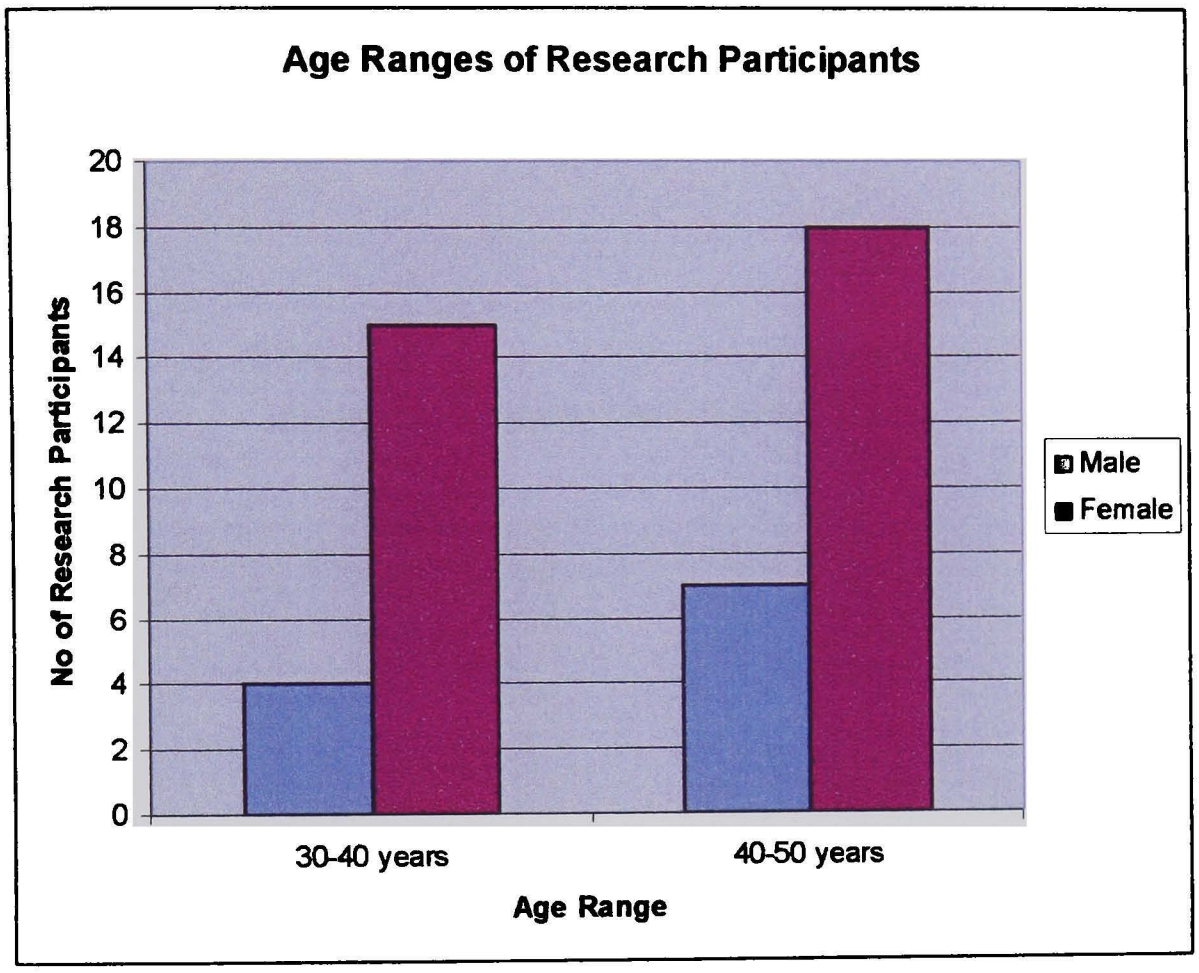
Type of work	Male	Female
Paid		
- Secondary/Further Education	2	5
- Higher Education	1	2
Sessional work	2	8
Voluntary – unpaid	3	9
Full-time paid work	2	7
Self-employed		1
Teaching/Training Part-time	1	1



Appendix 9 (cont)

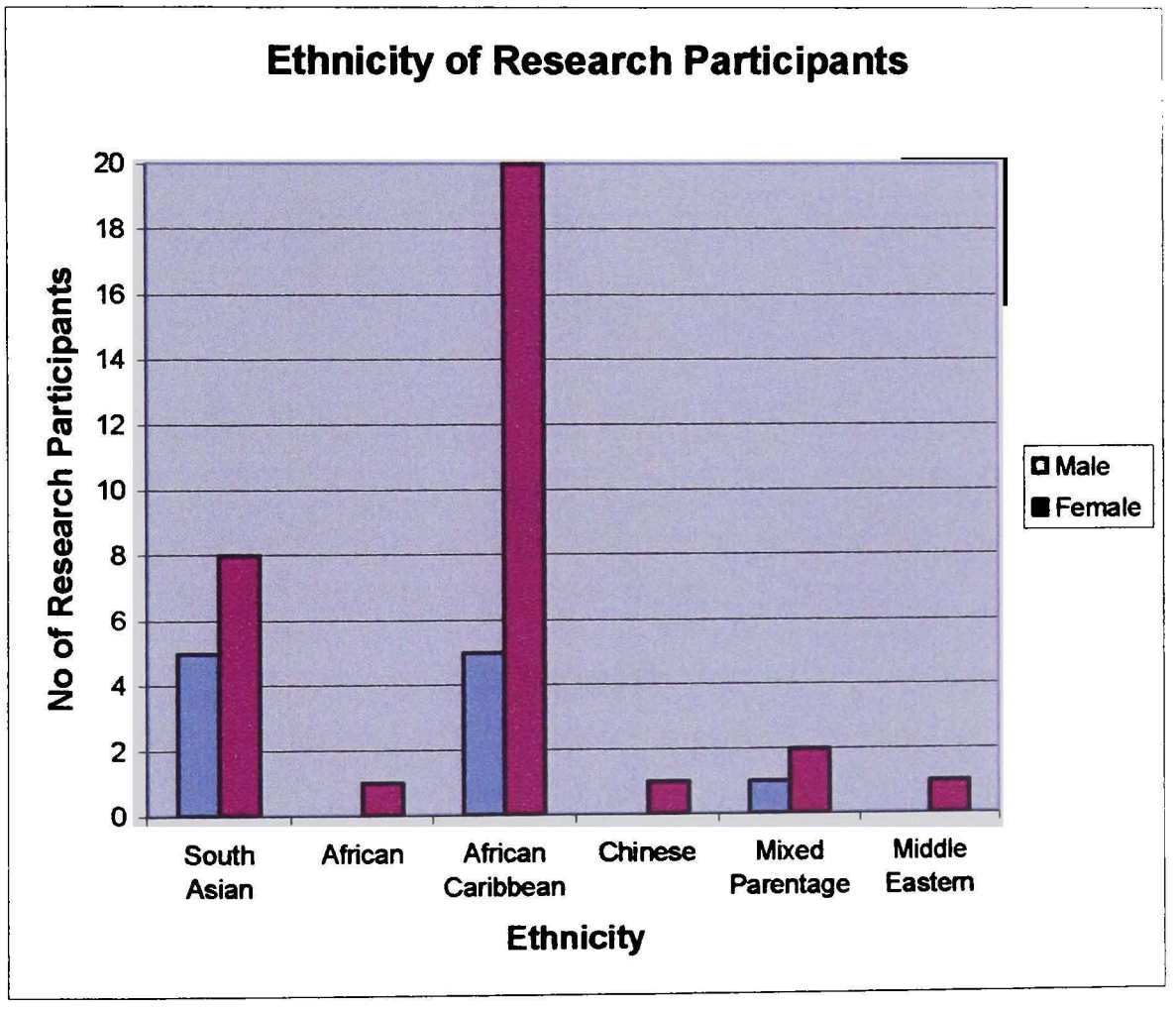
f) Age range of research participants

Age range	Male	Female
30-40 years	4	15
40-50 years	7	18



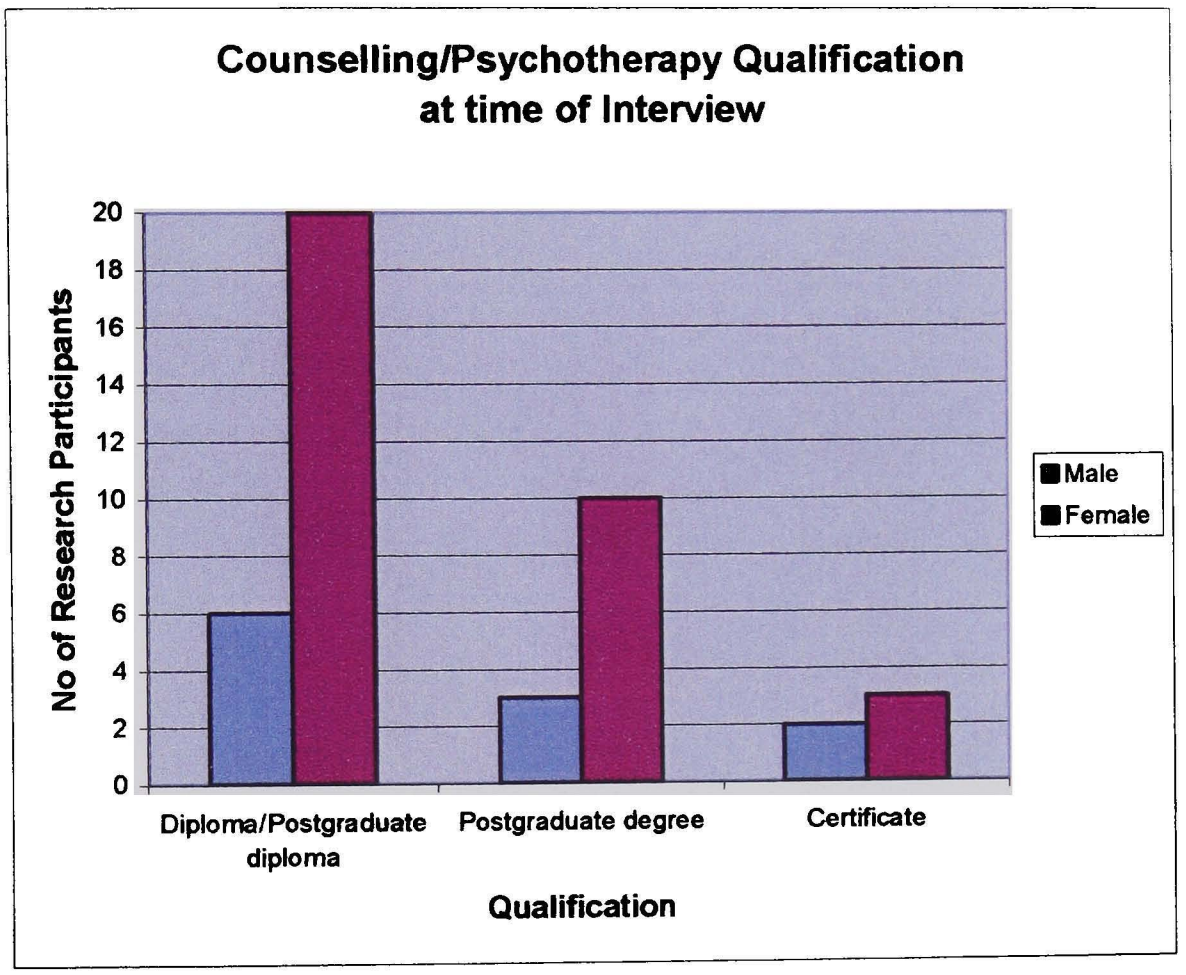
g) Ethnicity as identified by research participants

Ethnicity	Male	Female
South Asian	5	8
African		1
African Caribbean	5	20
Chinese		1
Mixed Parentage	1	2
Middle Eastern		1
Total	**11**	**33**



h) Counselling/Psychotherapy Qualification at time of Interview

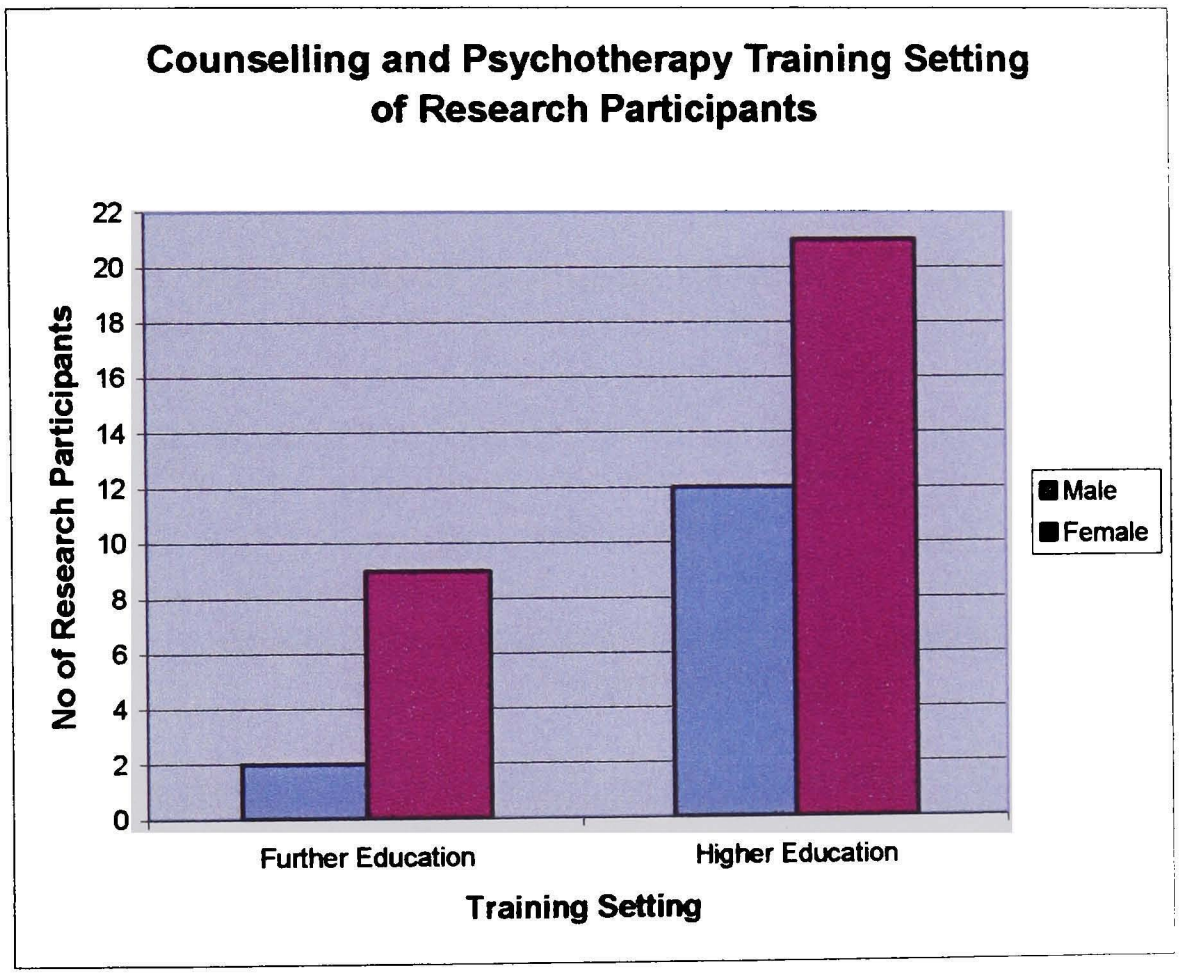
Qualification	Male	Female
Diploma/Postgraduate diploma	6	20
Postgraduate degree	3	10
Certificate	2	3



Appendix 9 (cont)

i) Counselling and Psychotherapy Training Setting of Research Participants

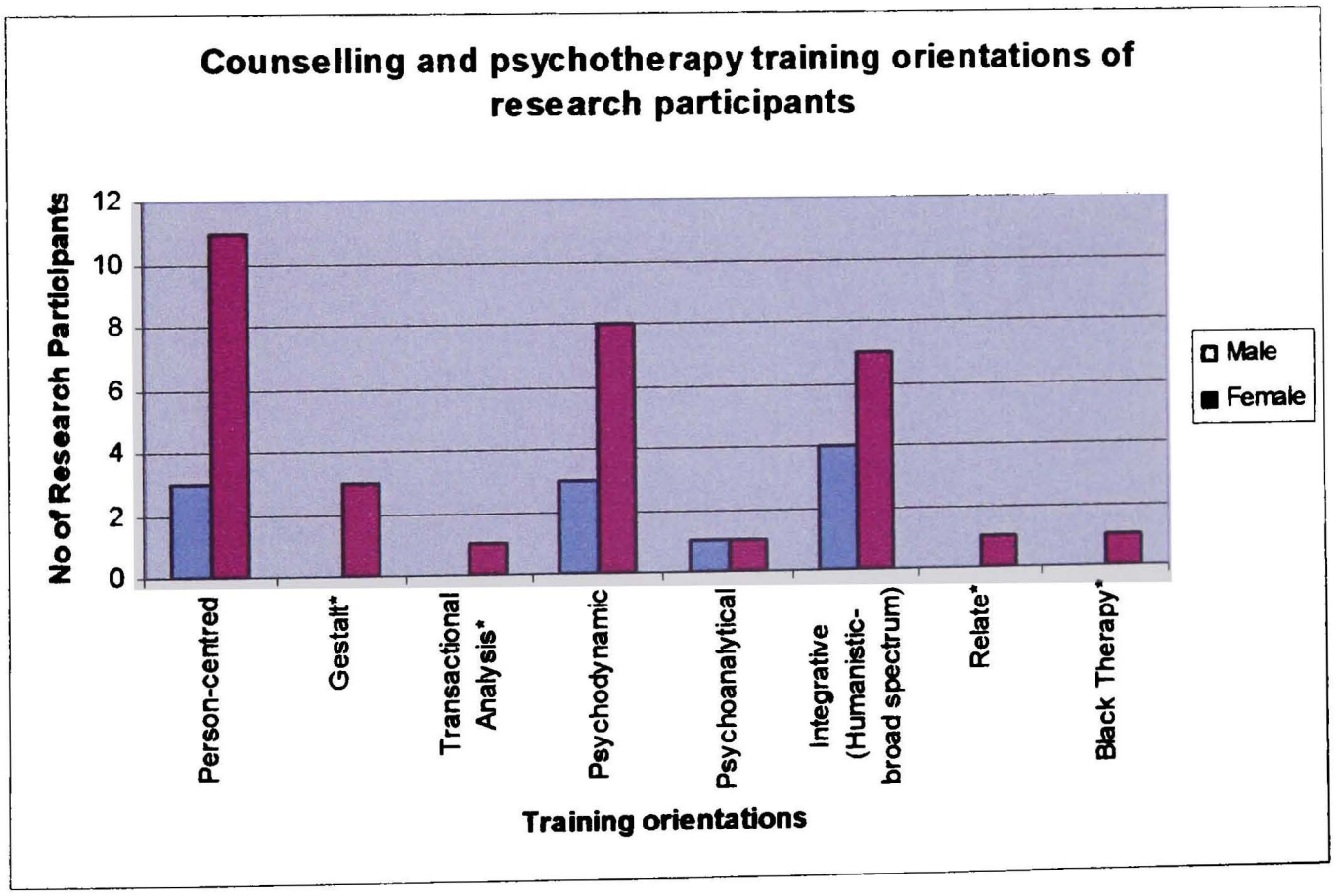
Setting	Male	Female
Further Education	2	12
Higher Education	9	21



j) *Counselling and psychotherapy training orientations of research participants*

Orientation	Male	Female
Person-centred	3	11
Gestalt*		3
Transactional Analysis*		1
Psychodynamic	3	8
Psychoanalytical	1	1
Integrative(Humanistic-broad spectrum)	4	7
Relate*		1
Black Therapy*		1

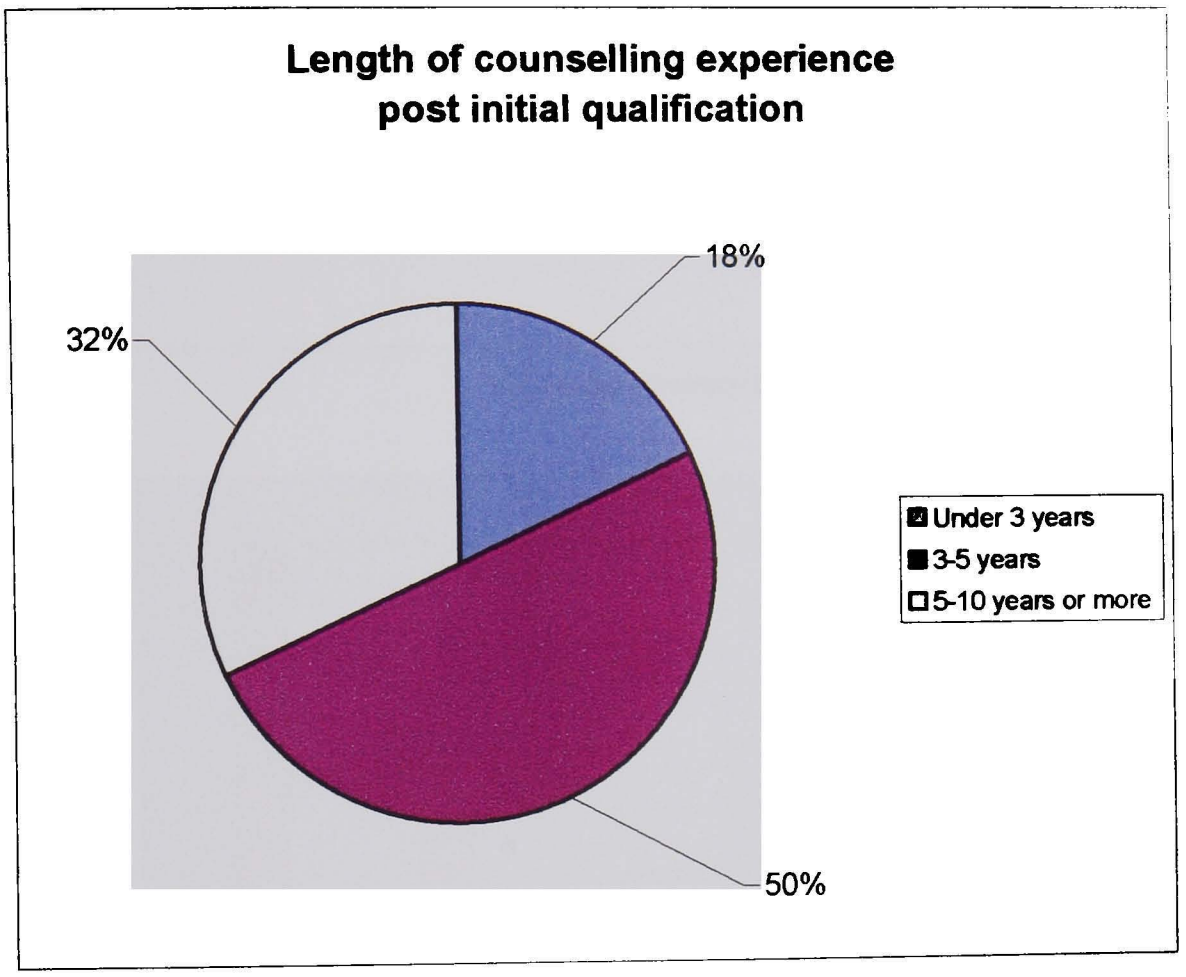
**indicates where research participants have had additional training in these disciplines*



Appendix 9 (cont)

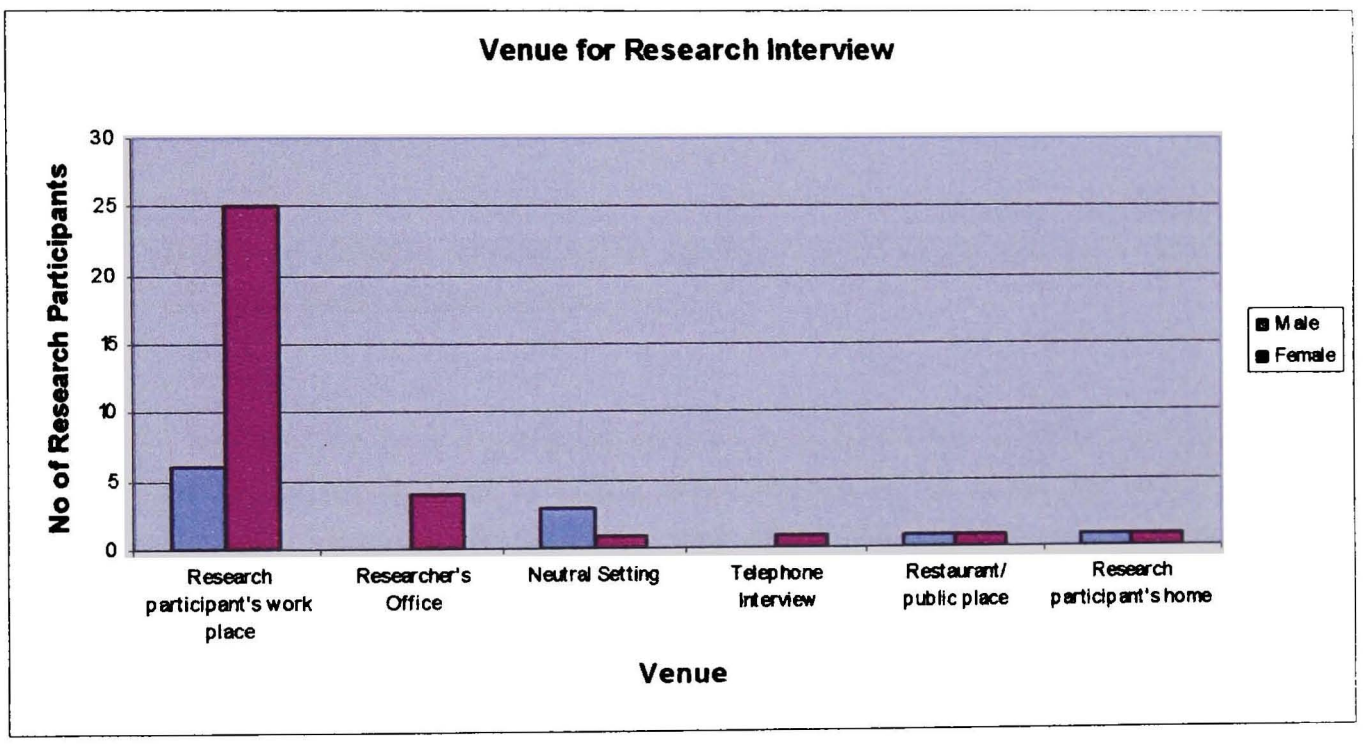
k) Length of counselling experience post initial qualification

Under 3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years or more
8	22	14



l) Venue for research interview

Location	Male	Female
Research participant's work place	6	25
Researcher's Office		4
Neutral Setting	3	1
Telephone Interview		1
Restaurant/ public place	1	1
Research participant's home	1	1



Appendix 9 (cont)

n) excerpt from an interview transcript

Initials are followed by number locating location in the transcript.
Key: VW= Val Watson
XX= Anonymised research participant

VW33 So really you see that you have got to where you've got to as quite an achievement.

XX34 I suppose that's why I've got some concern about them selecting the other black trainee, I spoke about this because they would say this to me, when they were struggling to recruit and I remember one time the centre manager, who isn't counselling trained, but would say how pleased she was that they'd got me through selection and were hoping that I wouldn't be the only black counsellor left, so I know they were concerned about that but not enough necessarily to change their training.

VW35 But you clearly investing in quite a lot of hope weren't you in terms of what their expectations were?

XX36 I've sort of had a parallel experience here but on the one hand they have someone who is black who seems to be able but don't actually want to learn anything from you about things that are quite clearly, I was learning and I still am but there were certain issues they hadn't even begun to think about and they don't particularly want to learn from you and that has been my experience, it's one way. Apart from my experience with my black supervisor towards the end of my time there.

XX37 So you went on to do a degree in counselling or something along those lines. How was that training?

XX38 There were certainly more questions than answers at the end of it. I think it was a little bit stimulus developing stages. [Name of university and course removed]... I was in the [removed] intake, so they weren't completely sussed and that was evident and a little disorganised and we had personal development groups and I was never quite clear on the process but I don't think they were either. We as a group ended up sorting that out which we never really managed. We went through the whole 2 years and came out the other end still not really clear.

VW39 So you were left with what was that – what was that like?

XX40 In terms of the groups there was quite a lot of rivalry, competition going on and again I've said that I had this experience before, I suppose I learnt that I could be scapegoated, again I was the only black person in the group, I suppose I was different in that group, I wasn't maybe as open and certainly wasn't as challenging. I made a choice, I felt that I wasn't that committed to the group, but it still happened, I still had this similar experience. I remember being described as defensive. Certain members of the group tried to use me, as the only black person in the group, to find out how was it for me and how did I experience it, they clearly picked up on the fact that issues around race hadn't been addressed and similarly issues around gender hadn't been addressed and they were trying to pick my brains about and I didn't want to play.

VW41 So it was almost like reverse, in one way you wanted to engage with someone but learnt from that that it wasn't a good idea.

XX42 The whole place was chaotic so you could almost see what would happen but it happened as you say in reverse. That's the only thing I learnt I suppose and I talked about this with the supervisor that the whole business of one to one counselling is disclosing rubbish because sitting there as a black person you're disclosing an awful lot and they have their own ideas about that anyway and I suppose in the group context that's what happens whether I open my mouth and raise it as an issue or whether I don't.

VW43 Or using it as some kind of images that are projected in your work if you do speak or you don't speak because if you don't speak…..

XX44 Yes because if I don't speak that's angry silence and if I do ???

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